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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE MEANING OF PEER COACHING FOR EXPERIENCED TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY

By

Neil Hector Scott

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1988

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Meaning of Peer Coaching for Experienced Teachers: A Case Study" submitted by Neil Hector Scott in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Elementary Education.

....
Supervisor

....

....

....

C. Chamberlin.........

....
External Examiner

Date: June 14, 1988..................

DEDICATION

To Anne who has been a great source of inspiration
and support for the past twenty years.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the meaning which experienced teachers attributed to peer coaching. Using a conceptual framework of symbolic interactionism and qualitative methodology, the researcher conducted a naturalistic investigation over a five-month period. The focus of the study was three elementary school teachers who were part of a staff which undertook to observe and conference one another on a regular basis. Each of the focus teachers and the majority of the staff had been previously involved in their district's Teacher Effectiveness Program which utilized the Joyce and Showers' inservice model to transfer instructional skills and classroom management strategies to the classroom.

This case study developed the biographies of the key teachers and portrayed both the school context and the Teacher Effectiveness Program which provided their initial ideas of what peer coaching involved. These influences helped define the situation from the participant's perspective. An analysis of the teachers' interactions as they negotiated goals and attempted to accommodate their peer's conferencing and teaching styles revealed the meanings they gave to peer coaching.

The data revealed common elements in the teachers' meanings. These were categorized as dimensions, components, and factors of peer coaching; a conceptual model was developed to depict their inter-relationships. The meaning of peer coaching was unique to each teacher, yet revealed a common pattern. The teachers felt that peer coaching was an evolving phenomenon. An interactive dimension and an emotional dimension were central and pervasive to their experiences. Peer coaching was seen to have various components which had special meaning for the teachers. These were identified as technical, collegial, personal, practical, and professional. Although each of the teachers acknowledged the presence of these components, personal beliefs appeared to account for individual emphases.

Certain contextual factors were also observed to affect the teachers' meanings. These were the role of the principal, the selection of coaching partners, the provision of inservice training, time-cost considerations, and the cyclical arrangement of the peer coaching program.

The study concludes with working hypotheses generated from the data, and with recommendations for both school- and district-based personnel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to a number of persons and institutions whose assistance made it possible for me to complete this dissertation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Although one generally thinks of a teacher educator as a university professor working with student teachers during their preservice period, in my capacity as a school principal, I also think of myself as a teacher educator who works with teachers during the inservice period of their careers. During the past twelve years I have become increasingly involved with professional development both for individuals and for groups of teachers.

The need for various forms of continuing teacher inservice, both for beginning and experienced teachers, has been well documented (Everett-Turner, 1985; Fullan, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Newberry, 1979; Ryan, 1970, 1980; Veenman, 1984). Lortie (1975) refers to the sink-or-swim situation faced by many teachers in their first assignments. Fullan (1982) frequently portrays images of beginning and experienced teachers who feel isolated and cut off from their peers by the cellular organization of schools. It is a common pattern experienced by virtually all of us who have taught in the public schools of this nation.

Inservice education provides one vehicle for breaking down the barriers to communication - for bringing teachers together so that they can interact both as professionals and as persons-in-relation (Hunt, 1978). The potential of inservice education for professional development is widely accepted. In 1984, the Report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development stated:

> Several member countries were virtually unanimous in recommending that a very high priority should be given to the expansion and improvement of inservice training as an investment in the future quality of the teaching force. (p.1)

On the other hand, the great potential which inservice education appears to offer teachers is frequently not realized, as Wood and Thompson (1980) have indicated:

> Most staff development programs are irrelevant and ineffective - a waste of money. (p.374)

Pansegrau (1984) concluded that teachers often attend formal inservice sessions for social reasons rather than with professional training expectations. It is in more informal activities where teachers learn skills which will transfer to the classroom. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that large, one-shot inservice sessions have little impact on what a teacher does in the classroom (Bents and Howey, 1981; Burrello and Orbaugh, 1982; Sparks, 1983).

As an administrator trapped in a pattern of inservice education imposed by provincial and district officials, I found it difficult to analyze what was happening or to explore innovative alternatives. I felt frustrated by the lack of continuity between inservice sessions, by the absence of follow-up, and by the obvious lack of transfer of skills into the classroom. I sensed these things intuitively. During the past year I have had an opportunity to reflect on my experiences and to put my scattered thoughts and intuitions into the context of current research and the literature in this field.

Since the mid 1970's there has been an increasingly articulate analysis of how professional development can be improved. A recurring theme which seems to hold potential for enabling teachers to continue their professional development is interaction and collaboration among teaching peers. Several writers have suggested that the collaborative process should be utilized at all stages of teacher development. Fullan (1982), in analyzing why very few educational innovations were successful, concluded that:

> Collegiality among teachers as measured by the frequency of communication, mutual support, help, etc., was a strong indicator of implementation success in virtually every research study on the topic....There is no getting around the primacy of personal contact. Teachers need to participate in skill-training workshops, but they also need to have one-to-one and group opportunities to receive and give help and more simply to converse about the meaning of change. (p.121)

Little (1982, p.339) investigated the differences between successful and unsuccessful schools and observed that "staff development appears to have the greatest prospects for influence where there is a prevailing norm of collegiality."

Joyce and Showers (1983) studied the problem of transferring inservice skills to the classroom, and suggested that a follow-up component, which they termed coaching, was missing from unsuccessful inservice projects. Coaching seems to incorporate many of the collegial aspects of professional development seen in the literature.

There is a steadily growing body of literature which suggests the effectiveness of coaching in bringing about skill transfer (Baker, 1983; Bennett, 1987; Fullan, 1982; Gant, 1985; Joyce and Showers, 1983; Licklider,1986; Odden and Anderson, 1986). However, to date, only limited research has been done on the effects of peer coaching on the participants. That is the purpose of this research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the meaning which three teachers gave to the experience of peer coaching. The original intent of the research project was to study two teachers, but changing circumstances resulted in the inclusion of a third teacher. I became a participant observer with two experienced elementary teachers at a time, in a peer coaching arrangement during a five-month period. Utilizing the conceptual framework of symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1969) and methodology associated with the naturalistic paradigm (Guba, 1981), I investigated the meanings which the ongoing interaction of peer coaching had for the participants. This study takes into consideration the fact that the context for these teachers includes a school staff which was involved in a peer coaching project, and in a school district where there is a highly organized, highly visible Teacher Effectiveness Program [TEP]. The review of the related literature has the added effect of creating a reference base against which the working hypotheses generated in this study may be compared. Figure 1 is an attempt to symbolize the holistic perspective of this study by representing how a pair of peer coaches represents social interaction within two layers of context which have developed from models described in the related literature.

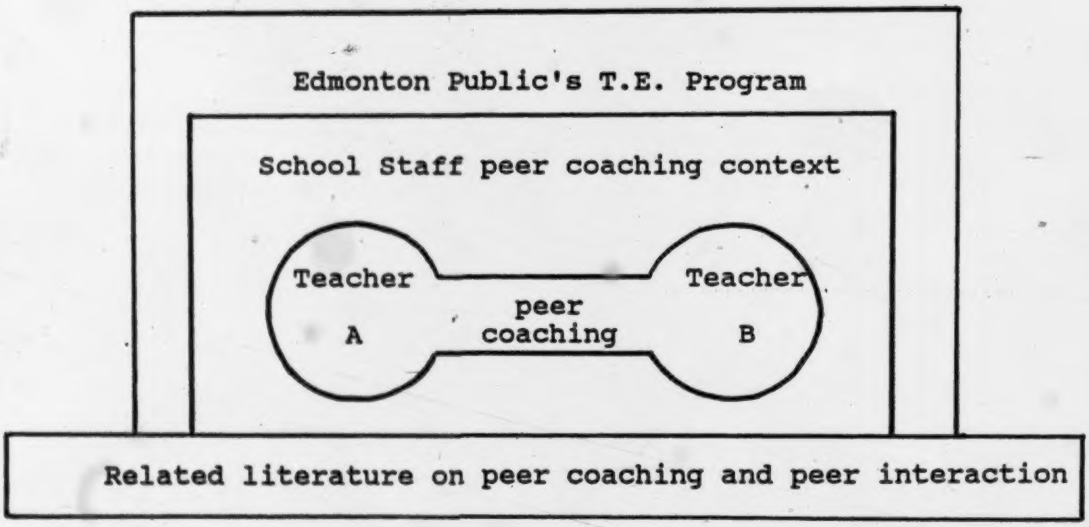
A Case Study

Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p.58) describe a case study as a "detailed examination of one setting." This study constitutes a case study of three women who are experienced elementary teachers and who are involved in peer coaching. In order to avoid confusion, the reader should realize that this study began as a study of two teachers who were coaching peers. After approximately six weeks of data collection they formed new partnerships. The teacher who opted out of the focal study agreed to continue 'at arm's-length'. Consequently, it is a study of three teachers each of whom had two partners.

Stake (1978, p.5) argues that case studies are often preferable in education because they may be "epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience". It is my hope that this case study will present an account of peer coaching which is not only credible, dependable, and confirmable, but which also enables other readers to imagine themselves in this situation.

FIGURE 1

Project Overview: Relation of coaching pair to contexts and the related literature.


Edmonton Public's T.E. Program
School Staff peer coaching context
Teacher A
peer coaching
Teacher B
Related literature on peer coaching and peer interaction

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework of symbolic interactionism (Blumer; 1969) was selected for this research project because it offered a perspective for analyzing the development of meaning which occurs between individuals who are engaged in social interaction. The study of evolving meaning in peer coaching seemed to require a systematic approach which offered a comprehensive perspective of the various elements people bring to a situation, how these elements affect the way people act and react, and how meaning emerges as a consequence. Such a theoretical framework needs to take into account both internal and external elements and be compatible with naturalistic research. Symbolic interactionism seems to meet these criteria. It is important to note that I regard symbolic interactionism as a framework which guides data collection and analysis. I did not adopt it as a theory which necessarily precluded the use of other models or ideas which aided the collection, description, or analysis of the data.

The Naturalistic Paradigm and Qualitative Methodology

A naturalistic research paradigm which can accommodate a symbolic interactionist framework and qualitative methodology was selected for this research project.

Naturalistic is a term used by Guba (1981) to identify a research paradigm used to investigate naturally occurring social phenomena. Some writers (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982) would call this form of research, qualitative, others would refer to it as interpretative (Duignan, 1981), and still others would suggest it is a form of ethnography modified for a short-term application in an educational setting.

One important characteristic of naturalistic research is that researchers acknowledge their interdependence with the people who are the focus of the investigation. They accept that multiple realities exist and they are open to all of them. They recognize the uniqueness of the phenomenon being studied, yet believe that the value in describing and analyzing this case comes from its similarity to other situations with which readers may be familiar. Deep, rich, qualitative data which permit the researchers and readers to identify with the key informants in their setting are considered critical. Researchers attempt to describe meaning from the perspective of their informants and, as such, they represent the key data-gathering instruments. While an approach to naturalistic research can be articulated, the course which events will take cannot, nor do the researchers attempt to control them. Hence, researchers of social phenomena must be prepared to record the natural flow of events.

Delimitations and Definitions

The focus of this peer coaching study was three experienced teachers in a public elementary school in a suburb of the city of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Experienced teachers, for the purpose of this study, were defined as teachers who have taught for more than three years after certification.

Peer coaching refers to a mutual arrangement between two or more teachers in which Teacher 'A' enters the classroom of Teacher 'B' to observe that colleague teach, generally for fifteen to thirty minutes. During this period the observer (Teacher A) makes a record of the interactions between the teacher and students. Teacher 'A' then retires to analyze the data for examples of instructional or class-management skills which the coaching pair have previously agreed to monitor. Following this analysis, the observer holds a conference with the teacher, citing examples of when the teacher successfully used the skill(s). The coaching peer initiates a discussion for the purpose of raising the teacher's conscious awareness of the use of a skill. More sophistocated conferences would attempt to expand the teacher's repertoire by generating alternate uses of a skill, and to enhance, refine, or expand the teacher's use of a skill. Each peer coaching session involves observing instruction, analyzing the data collected, and conferencing the teacher. The cycle is complete when, in the next session, the teachers switch roles. A significant feature of peer coaching is the fact that the participants enjoy equal status; hence, peer coaching is not supposed to be associated with formal supervision or evaluation.

Preliminary Questions

The central question of this study was: What is the meaning of peer coaching for experienced teachers?

In order to answer this question the investigator anticipated that the following related questions which grew out of the symbolic interactionist framework would have to be addressed:

1. Which elements constitute a definition of the situation for participants in peer coaching?

2. How do the participants interpret the definitions of their peers in the peer coaching context?

3. How did the teachers accommodate one another in the joint lines of action represented by their peer interaction?

Significance of the Study

In these days of reduced budgets, many educational programs are coming under increased scrutiny. The programs which tend to maintain funding are those whose expenditures can be justified. The data from this study could prove useful in answering questions concerning the value of the TEP to teachers in the Edmonton Public School District.

Every teacher has the experience of being a beginning teacher for a limited period of his/her professional career. The fact that this study investigates the impact of peer coaching on the professional and personal lives of experienced teachers makes its implications relevant to the majority of the teaching force.

This study provides a description of a peer coaching experience with which it is hoped teachers will identify. As a case study, it could provide teachers with insights into their past or future involvement with peer coaching. Also, both the study and the recommendations could serve as a useful resource for inservice educators considering the use of peer coaching as a form of professional development.

The data analysis has generated working hypotheses and a model which may encourage the development of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and serve to support or refute the findings of other researchers.

This study is important because it investigates a phenomenon which is increasingly common in teaching but which has received limited systematic study. It also employs a qualitative methodology which has not been generally used to investigate studies of teacher effectiveness and peer coaching.

The recommendations may prompt Edmonton Public School Board administrators to re-examine the role of the Teacher Effectiveness Program, first, as it relates to training teachers to coach, and secondly, as it relates to the district's responsibility to support school-based coaching projects.

One certain beneficiary of this study has been the researcher. This study will enable me to explore ways to encourage teachers to help one another professionally. It has taught me skills which will help break down the barriers of isolation which separate teachers and which prevent them from sharing not only their professional expertise, but also their personal support and concern for colleagues.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. Chapter 2 provides a review of the current literature on peer coaching and attempts to frame it in both an inservice and a professional development context. Chapter 3 combines an examination of the symbolic interactionist framework which guided the investigation with the naturalistic paradigm which subsumed it. This chapter also includes a description of the methodological procedures used for identifying the subjects, gaining entry, collecting data, and analyzing it. The data are presented in both chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 describes the elements which constitute the definitions of the three key informants; it also includes descriptions of Forest Grove School and the Teacher Effectiveness Program. Chapter 5 addresses lines of action which emerged from the data concerning the interactions of the teachers in peer coaching. Chapter 6 provides an analysis of the data based on the descriptions of the previous two chapters. A model of peer coaching which emerged from the analysis represents one of several working hypotheses which this analysis generates. Chapter 7 summarizes the conclusions implicit in the analysis of data. From these conclusions, the researcher identified implications and made recommendations for school- and district-based personnel. The chapter concludes with personal reflections on the suitability of the theoretical framework and naturalistic research.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

The term peer coaching is an evolved term with both a long and a short history. It has a long history because teachers have been helping other teachers improve since the dawn of their profession. It has a short history because the term is a relatively recent one, only appearing in the literature in this decade. This review of the related literature and research on peer coaching attempts to show that its roots lie in professional and staff development, that currently there are both specific and generic applications of peer coaching, and that helpful guidelines are available for those considering its use.

Professional Development Roots

In the 1970's and early 1980's, many educators and researchers turned to the problem of inservice education. They attempted to answer why, despite large commitments of time and money, there appeared to be little significant improvement in public education. This period of investigation produced a number of important guidelines for effective inservice education and, hence, professional development. These guidelines seemed to encompass the accumulated wisdom and knowledge from three related fields of education: adult learning, educational change, and inservice education. Fullan's (1982) book, The Meaning of Educational Change, attempted to relate these three areas of investigation and explain not only why educational change is so difficult to achieve, but also what factors significantly affect change. A central theme of this comprehensive text is that people and their subjective realities will ultimately determine the fate of proposed changes. Hence, as innovations move from the initiation stage through the implementation stage, those who will be affected must be involved in ways which allow them to understand the change and adapt it to their own situation. For educational change to occur, teachers must believe in it, feel ownership of it, and be supported through implementation to the point of internalization. It is especially in this support stage where change theory relates to peer coaching.

Thompson (1985) has completed a literature review of adult learning and combined it with a similar one for inservice education. She points out that:

> 1. Adults have a need to be self-directed.
> 2. Adults come to any learning experience with a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, skills, interests and competence.
> 3. Adults will learn, retain and use what they perceive to be relevant to their personal and professional needs.
> 4. Adults need collegiality rather than criticism from their inservice leaders.

> 5. Adult learning is ego-involved.
> 6. Adults will resist learning situations which they believe are an attack on their competence.
> 7. Adults have a need to integrate their present learning with past experience. (pp.8-9)

Lawrence (1974) was one of the first educators to articulate guidelines for inservice programs. Many others followed (Burrello and Orbaugh, 1982; Connors, 1982; Griffin, 1983; Hruska, 1978; Wood and Thompson; 1980). Thompson's (1985) synthesis is worth noting. Effective inservice should:

> 1. Allow for active teacher involvement in shaping the content and structure of the program.
> 2. Allow teachers to interact by sharing and assisting each other.
> 3. Provide for individual differences in the adults who attend.
> 4. Develop competencies by demonstration in real or simulated settings most closely resembling the conditions under which the program will be implemented.
> 5. Have leaders who are credible in the eyes of the participants.
> 6. Incorporate the elements of demonstration, supervised trials and feedback; do not expect teachers to store up ideas and practices for future use.
> 7. Be delivered at the local level whenever possible.
> 8. Be systematically planned and conducted.
> 9. Be cyclical, sustained, and ongoing rather than one-shot activities.
> 10. Be collaborative in design, delivery, and evaluation.
> 11. Be supported by adequate allocations of time and resources.
> 12. Receive administrative support at both the building and district level.
> 13. Be regularly and continuously evaluated against the objectives established by the program. (pp.10-15)

An underlying theme in adult learning, change theory, and inservice guidelines, is that professional development involves teachers interacting with other professionals over an extended period in ways which are meaningful, comfortable, and purposeful. Glatthorn (1987), in a recent article, suggests cooperative professional development as an inclusive term which may be used to refer to peer-oriented systems. He identifies five such systems which are presently being utilized for professional growth: professional dialogue, curriculum development, peer supervision, action research, and peer coaching. Although all have a common collaborative approach to professional development, each has unique features which distinguish it. Glatthorn's article is useful because it helps to differentiate among peer activities, some of which could be confused with peer coaching.

The Power of Peers

Peer coaching still had not emerged as a form of professional development when the major thrust to improve inservice education was being made. However, these studies brought to light two conclusions which may have been critical factors for the evolution of peer coaching. One was the powerful influence of colleagues in teaching; the second was the difficulty of transferring new skills to the classroom.

Lortie (1975), in his frequently-quoted sociological study of teaching, observed that for teachers, personal experience, supplemented by collegial influence, was a more important source of pedagogical knowledge than formal training in institutions. As a follow-up to his study of inservice education (Lawrence, 1974), Lawrence and Branch (1978) argued that peer support systems were at the heart of inservice education. They arranged teachers into small groups which they termed peer panels to serve as informal support groups and to be vehicles for the continuing professional development of members. Berman and McLaughlin (1978), investigating factors affecting educational change for the Rand Corporation, stated that "peers were generally the most effective counsellors when it came to advising implementors-to-be about problems they could expect, suggesting ways to remedy them, and encouraging new project staff that 'they can do it'" (p.42). Flanders (1980), who investigated the state of professional development for the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, reported that teachers described professional workshops as a smorgasbord which had variety but lacked continuity. They alleged that university training was useless and colleagues were their main source of help. Flanders recommended that the teaching profession "resist techno-rational control and assert the centrality of student-teacher relationships" (p.24) in order to make meaning out of the teaching profession. For him, that implied that professional development should focus on programs of teacher research and interpersonal discussions.

In 1982 Little reported the results of her ethnographic study of successful and unsuccessful schools. At a time when there was considerable interest in learning how to make schools more successful, Little made two key observations: the school as a professional unit appeared to have a powerful influence on its teachers; staff development appeared to have the greatest prospects for influence where there is a prevailing norm of collegiality (pp.338-339). These observations underlined the importance for staff development of interactions among teachers within their own school. Her use of the term staff development, rather than inservice, may be an indication that Little, like Lieberman (1978), believes there is a subtle but significantly different connotation to these terms. Lieberman argues that staff development is concerned with the effect of the school staff on an individual teacher over an extended period of time. She rejects the idea of giving workshops or courses to teachers in isolation from their peers and the school. Staff development, for Lieberman, involves working with at least a portion of the entire staff over a long time period with the necessary supportive conditions.

The influence of peers on teacher development has been well established. Here at the University of Alberta, studies by Millikan (1979) and Carruthers (1986) have supported the contention that peers are the primary source of influence in teaching for both experienced and novice teachers.

The Supervision Connection. Although Little (1982) indicated that there was potential for staff development through collegiality within the workplace, Lortie's (1975) vision of isolated teachers in cellular organizations still seems to be the norm in many schools today. He suggests that part of the reason why each new teacher must begin afresh is that teaching lacks a technology. Socialization into teaching, according to Lortie, consists of a combination of personal experience and collegial influence. Yet, once accomplished, teachers often withdraw into their rooms where they give a higher priority to classroom activities than to school development. Rather than seeing peers as supportive and ego-boosting, some teachers may see them as interruptions which cut into class productivity. Such individualism among teachers, Lortie suggests, is congruent with the usual recruitment, socialization, and career rewards of teaching (p.212).

Although there is little joy for teachers in individual self-assessment, Lortie found that assessment in the form of supervision by superordinates is also viewed as threatening (p.150). Blumberg (1980) expanded on this theme in Supervisors and Teachers: A Private Cold War. He indicates that nearly seventy per cent of teachers "perceived supervision as often potentially dangerous" (p.2). Blumberg's book examines the nature of the human relationship that exists between supervisors and teachers. Based on his research and experience, Blumberg concludes that from a teacher's perspective, much of what passes for supervision in schools is a waste of time. He likens the situation to a cold war in which neither side trusts the other, yet each is convinced of the correctness of his/her own position. In his book, Blumberg explores ways in which supervision could have a positive impact on teachers and education. A key idea which emerges is that supervision should be seen as interpersonal intervention in which the supervisor and teacher engage in "reciprocal feedback and self-disclosure" (p.198). By rejecting the notion of evaluation in supervision, he discounts the involvement of principals who have a summative function to perform. He looks to peer-oriented supervisory arrangements, yet wonders if the school culture will support such an innovation. Although Blumberg states that there is a need for supervision if it is defined as "giving and receiving help regarding the performance of teaching" (p.18), he is unclear about who can effectively perform this task.

Blumberg views clinical supervision as "mechanistic and ritualistic" (p.191), but he acknowledges that it has the potential to develop into a form which emphasizes more open communication and trusting relationships.

Alfonso (1977), as if anticipating Blumberg's question, suggests that peer supervision will work if supervision is viewed as "a process of observation, analysis, and feedback" (p.595). Alfonso suggests that peer supervision, defined in this way, does not really involve teachers in many of the activities traditionally associated with supervision. Instead it is a narrowly-defined form which is "highly personal, clinically evaluative, and classroom-based" (ibid). Alfonso identifies both limitations to the impact of peer supervision and potential benefits. He points out that schools are not normally organized to permit peers to supervise one another. Hence, peer supervision is likely to be uncoordinated and unrelated to school goals for instructional improvement. Yet peer supervision promises to increase the number of interpersonal contacts for the purpose of improving instruction, to circulate the valuable experience which colleagues possess, and to encourage increased problem sharing. Alfonso believes that peer supervision can:

> ... help breed a new sense of responsibility among teachers, a responsibility both to help one's

> colleagues and to enlist the aid and analysis of others in improving one's own instruction. (p.601)

Whereas Alfonso neglected to suggest any particular technique for peer supervision, Withall and Wood (1979) chose to adapt the conference format advanced by proponents of clinical supervision. Withall and Wood argue that by letting the teacher control the conference focus and by adopting a systematic observation cycle, some of the anxiety which teachers experience with supervision will be removed. The influence of clinical supervision is also reflected in the human resources approach to supervision advocated by Sergiovanni and Starratt (1983) and in the writings of Goldsberry (1984). One of the appealing features of clinical supervision for some educators appears to be its provision of a technical component which Lortie (1975) felt the teaching profession lacked. Peer clinical supervision has the appearance of being systematic and it uses a technical language.

The influence of clinical supervision can be seen in the five forms of supervisory conference described by Hunter (1980). These conference styles, called A, B, C, D, and E, are based on four generalizations:

> 1. Supervisory conferences have two discrete functions: formative and summative.
> 2. A supervisory conference, like a lesson, should have a primary purpose.
> 3. The same principles of learning apply to teachers as to students.
> 4. Teaching is a performance and can best be improved through an analysis of behaviour. (pp.2-3)

Hunter refers to all of the types as instructional conferences, but each has a slightly different objective. The 'A' conference is intended to provide teachers with specific examples of their successful use of a new teaching skill in the classroom. The 'B' conference goes a step further by generating, in addition to the positive feedback, alternatives to the effective teacher behaviours. The 'C' conference is slightly more complex because the teacher and observer seek to find solutions to some aspect of the lesson with which the teacher is not satisfied. The 'D' conference requires the observer to identify and label a less effective part of the lesson; then the teacher selects from generated alternatives a behaviour which he or she plans to use. The 'E' conference is intended to promote continuing professional growth in teachers whose excellence in teaching is already recognized.

Although Hunter (1986) recommends eliminating pre-observation conferences, she suggests that a planning conference replace them. The similarities between Hunter's instructional conferences and those of clinical supervision are quite striking. Both advocate a prior discussion of the skills to be observed, a classroom observation period, an analysis of teaching behaviours in a conference, the mutual involvement of teacher and observer, and a predictable cycle of joint activities. The connection between supervision and peer coaching is possibly nowhere more evident than in the use of Hunter's instructional conferences by teachers involved in peer coaching. These conference styles were used by teachers in the two-year study reported by Grimmett et al (1985), and in Wolfe's (1983) study. The instructional processes consultants of the Edmonton Public School Board regularly employ Hunter's 'A' and 'B' conference styles with teachers enrolled in their Teacher Effectiveness Program. This example does not involve peers coaching peers; however, in follow-up school-based programs, teachers regularly utilize Hunter conferences.

It is worth noting that Hunter's instructional conferences are often used in conjunction with her "instructional theory into practice" program (Hunter, 1982). This program identifies principles of teaching as well as instructional skills and strategies which are intended to provide teachers with a systematic approach to instruction. Hunter's program and modifications of it, such as Cummings (1985), appear to provide the content for many of the current teacher effectiveness programs with which peer coaching is associated.

The Emergence of Coaching

A second major conclusion to emerge from the era of studies on inservice was that transferring new skills learned by teachers to the classroom was much more difficult and complex than anyone expected. Joyce is one educational researcher whose interest in the problems of inservice education goes back more than a decade. In 1978, Howey and Joyce conducted an extensive survey of inservice education in the United States. It confirmed that teacher inservice education was "not in the best of health" (p.206) and offered an analysis of the problems. One of many observations these authors made was that "inservice is ultimately personal/interpersonal" (p.211). Joyce continued to investigate the inservice enigma and in association with Showers, they hypothesized that a possible solution to the transfer problem lay in what they termed "coaching" (Joyce and Showers; 1980, p.380).

However, coaching was just a part of the total picture. Joyce and Showers developed their working hypotheses after two years study of accumulated research on the ability of teachers to acquire teaching skills and strategies. In their analysis, they distinguished between learning new skills and "fine tuning" (p.380) present ones. Not unexpectedly, they found that it was considerably easier to improve old skills than learn new ones. They also made distinctions in the extent to which learning affected the learner. In a manner reminiscent of Hall et al's (1975) levels of use, they identified four levels of impact. The lowest level, awareness, indicated that the teacher possesses cognitive knowledge of the subject. The second level, referred to as concepts and organized knowledge, implies enough familiarity with the concepts to be able to discuss them intelligently and to manipulate them. At level three, principles and skills, the teacher is capable of using the knowledge for action, but cannot apply it in unique situations. This becomes possible in level four, called application and problem solving. At this level, the teacher has fully integrated the new knowledge and understands the implications of the principles to the extent that he/she can adapt them to various classroom situations.

Having identified two purposes of training and four levels of learning, Joyce and Showers (1980) described five major components of training:

> 1. Presentation of theory or description of skill or strategy;
> 2. Modeling or demonstration of skills or models of teaching;
> 3. Practice in simulated and classroom settings;
> 4. Structured and open-ended feedback (provision of information about performance);
> 5. Coaching for application (hands-on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom). (p.380)

Joyce and Showers felt their research indicated that the more of these components which were included in training sessions, the higher the probability that transfer would occur. Although a small percentage of teachers who are given theory only may apply it, the power of the training components lies in combining and sequencing them. Joyce and Showers write:

> When the other training components are used in combination, the levels of impact are considerable for most teachers up through the skill level... If consistent feedback is provided with classroom practice, a good many, but not all, will transfer their skills into the teaching situation. For many, however, direct coaching on how to apply the new skills and models appears to be necessary. (ibid, p.384)

A recent meta-analysis by Bennett (1987) reported that coaching in the classroom resulted in effect sizes which were 1.3 standard deviations higher than when coaching was not provided. Bennett also investigated the relationship of coaching to the other components of inservice. His study suggested that:

> Although the inclusion of Theory, Demonstration, Practice, and Feedback in the training programs produce meaningful transfer, the inclusion of these components made a meaningful difference in the teachers' acquisition of attitudes, knowledge, and skill. It seems combining these training components with coaching results in meaningful transfer. (pp.119-120)

Joyce and Showers claimed that coaching for application involved working with teachers to analyze the lesson content, examining the methods of instruction intended, and making plans to help students adapt to the new skills. Furthermore, they indicated that coaching could be provided by anyone familiar with the innovation: supervisors, peers, principals, or inservice trainers.

This original formulation of coaching as one component of inservice training appears to have been the base from which later refinements and elaborations have evolved. In 1980, when Joyce attended a Conference on Inservice held at the University of Alberta, he expounded on his model of an inservice grid which related the five training components to the four levels of impact. He also emphasized the need for training both in the preservice and inservice education of teachers:

> It is crucial that an environment be created which is sufficiently supportive to maintain the teacher until he is able to add the new strategy to his repertoire. This really means that every teacher needs to be an expert coach. (p.3)

It is important to note that although teachers coaching other teachers was implicit in the writings of Joyce and Showers, at this point the focus was clearly on coaching as an additional aspect of inservice training which anyone knowledgeable in a particular skill could use to facilitate transfer of skills.

The Evolution of Coaching

Joyce and Showers' model of coaching appeared to shed new light on the training, implementation, and maintenance stages of inservice education. As others turned their attention to the need for interpersonal classroom support, coaching began to evolve.

Mohlman et al (1982) developed an inservice model which consisted of a series of workshops held at three-week intervals, peer observation, post-observation conferences, and classroom experimentation by the teacher. Each workshop began with a discussion of the peer observations conducted between workshops. Next, a new skill to be learned was introduced and discussed in both its research-based context and the school context. A trainer demonstrated the skill and, if it was feasible, the teachers practised it. Workshop sessions ended by reviewing the form to be used for recording observations, by scheduling observation times, by filling out feedback forms, and by reading relevant research articles.

Several features of this research were noteworthy with respect to peer coaching. The planners designed peer observation instruments to focus on students' behaviours rather than teachers'. Observation teams consisted of three teachers. This meant that each person was observed twice between workshops. The teams used both pre- and post-observation conferences. In the first cycle of the project, post-analysis conferences involved a simple inspection of the observation forms by teacher and observer. However, in the second cycle, when teams felt that there was sufficient rapport, the conference became a mutual problem-solving effort. Mohlman et al also reported that in the period following the observation/conference, some teachers experimented with their new insights, then commented on their findings at the next workshop discussion. In evaluating the model, the researchers discovered that:

> [Teachers'] reactions to the workshops were overwhelmingly positive.... They appreciated the peer observations and the chance to share their ideas at the workshops. They were especially pleased that the workshops emphasized practical, specific techniques that were easily transferred to the classroom. (p.18)

Mohlman et al noted that Joyce and Showers' (1980) inservice model had been influential in the design of their inservice education. They suggested that in the workshop sessions the presentation of theory had been combined with demonstration as well as with limited practice and feedback. Most practice and feedback and some coaching, however, occurred during the peer observation/conference sessions between workshops.

This four-stage inservice model places considerable emphasis on its cyclical nature and the role played by the workshop to both reflect and plan. As a pattern for professional development, it resembles the action research cycle of plan, act, observe, and reflect described by Kemmis and McTaggart (1982).

In another study, Sparks (1983A) studied nineteen junior high teachers divided into three groups, to discover the relationships between training attitudes and behaviour in the classroom. All three groups participated in five weekly effective-use-of-time-workshops. The second group added peer observation; the third group added coaching by the inservice trainer. Results showed that the second group improved the most while the coached group showed the least improvement. Sparks wondered if the fact that teachers in this group were older and male, may have accounted for their lack of improvement. Sparks concluded that peer observation appeared to enhance teachers' efforts at improvement, but that teachers needed to develop a belief in the importance of using recommended techniques.

The results of these two studies culminated in Sparks' (1983B) article called "Synthesis of Research on Staff Development for Effective Teaching". In it she suggests that another category, discussing application, should be added to those of Joyce and Showers. This category implied that small group discussions added a dimension which the post-observation conferences lacked. It was informal discussion groups like these which Bentzen (1974) found to be powerful agents for change. Bents and Howey (1981) also observed that informal discussion groups like these cater to adult learners' needs to analyse experience. It is significant to note that coaching (Joyce and Showers, 1982), peer observation (Mohlman, 1982), discussion sessions (Sparks, 1983A, 1983B) and conferencing (Hunter, 1980) all constitute a form of personal interaction for the purpose of transferring instructional techniques to the classroom.

The common theme these educational writers and/or researchers seem to be making is that continuing, meaningful, personal contact is essential if new ideas are to be transferred to the classroom setting and become part of a teacher's repertoire. Fullan (1982) summed up the importance of developing collegiality and peer support systems for change to occur when he said:

> The more teachers experience the rewards of interaction the more they will use the criterion of professional contact and development - satisfaction from the intellectual and practical benefits of helping, getting help, and sharing with other teachers - as a measure of whether to become involved in innovation. And make no mistake about it, focused teacher interaction is essential to large-scale successful change. (p.121)

The problem of transfer continued to plague change agents, but as the problem continued to be studied, the terms describing the phenomenon became more refined. Joyce and Showers (1983) use the terms horizontal and vertical transfer to distinguish between the ability to transfer from a training situation to a similar classroom situation and the ability to adapt a newly learned behaviour to a different but analagous classroom situation. Taken in an inservice context, both vertical and horizontal transfer represent problem-solving skills with vertical transfer being of a higher order. Another term, executive control, referred to complete mastery of a skill to the extent that one could be creative in a vertical transfer situation.

As Joyce and Showers (1982) wrestled with the difficulty of transferring new repertoire learning, they developed three techniques in addition to coaching:

1. Forecasting the transfer process throughout the training cycle;
2. Reaching the highest possible level of skill development during training;
3. Developing executive control.

Forecasting the process of transfer means that teachers are taught that they will experience a period of discomfort before the new skill is transferred. In other words, telling teachers that they may get worse before they get better helps prepare them for the difficulties involved in successfully transferring new teaching strategies from the theoretical stage where one is aware, to the practical stage of being able to diagnose a learning situation and apply knowledge in a classroom. Beginning teachers experience a similar phenomenon when they are unable to apply their university training to the classroom and therefore frequently see it as theoretical and useless.

Developing a high degree of skill refers to the over-learning which Joyce and Showers suggest will increase the chances for successful transfer of learning. This over-learning occurs during the theory, demonstration, and practice components of the training stage. They suggest that it will require as much as twenty to thirty hours of study to learn the theory for an average model of teaching. At least fifteen to twenty demonstrations of the model should be observed, and each teacher should practise with peers and small groups of students ten to fifteen times before a high level of skill can be expected. These guidelines apply to models of teaching such as advance organizers or synectics - a model to develop creativity (Joyce and Weil, 1986). This would probably be comparable to a teacher effectiveness program on instructional skills or on classroom management.

Developing executive control at the practice level provides a teacher with "the intellectual scaffolding necessary to understand the skill and its appropriate use and to discriminate elements of the skill from one another" (Joyce and Showers; 1983, p.7). This deep understanding is necessary for the effective use and durability of new skills in a teacher's repertoire and it sets the stage for coaching.

Joyce and Showers (1983) consider coaching more than just an essential component of effective inservice:

> If we had our way, all school faculties would be divided into coaching teams, that is, teams who regularly observe one another's teaching and provide helpful information, feedback, and so forth. In short, we recommend the development of a coaching environment in which all personnel see themselves as one another's coaches. (p. 19)

The idea that coaching offered teachers more than just a means to implement classroom techniques was becoming increasingly evident. In 1982, Joyce and Showers had identified five different functions of coaching: providing accountability and companionship; providing technical feedback; joint analysis of skill application, monitoring students' adaptation to new skills, and providing support and encouragement until the new skill is mastered. Although the purpose for the coaching was still to implement successfully a teaching innovation, their 1982 article appeared to give added credence and significance to the human dimension in the coaching interaction.

This position received greater articulation in Showers' (1985) article, "Teachers Coaching Teachers". Compared to previous articles, this one is remarkable because, for the first time, it gave prominence to the notion of peer coaching. The article is also noteworthy for its recommendations regarding the training of coaches and its discussion of such issues as coaching and evaluation, coaching and supervision, the role of principals, and implementing coaching. This article also reflects an expanded vision of the role which coaching can play in education. An example of this can be seen in Showers' elaboration of the three purposes of coaching: "to build communities of teachers who continuously engage in the study of their craft"; to develop a "shared language and set of common understandings necessary for the collegial study of new knowledge and skills"; to "provide a structure for the follow up to training that is essential for acquiring new teaching skills and strategies" (ibid, p.44). Because of its scope and articulation, Showers' (1985) article represents a present-day touchstone for peer coaching. Articles on peer coaching written since 1985 have tended to be either elaborations on topics raised by Showers or descriptions of someone's variation on peer coaching.

Stages of Coaching. Showers (1985) suggests that coaching is a cyclical, two-stage process which teams of teachers engage in after they have learned both coaching skills and new instructional strategies. The first phase is characterized by observation and feedback and involves the use of "clinical assessment forms to record the presence of specific behaviours and the degree of thoroughness with which they are performed" (ibid p.44). It is important that feedback be specific, accurate, and non-evaluative. However, the focus in stage one is on recording occasions when teachers use the skill. Training for the second stage of coaching, according to Showers, should occur three to six weeks after teachers have learned a new skill. By then the initial coaching skills will have been mastered and teachers are ready to begin focusing on the appropriate use of the instructional strategies. Showers suggests that a model of a stage-two conference would involve collegial dialogue which might explore teachers' goals, examine theories behind the strategies being implemented, and seek mutually acceptable ways to match the two.

The question of whether there are stages of coaching is an important one, for as Stallings (1987) commented, some projects fail to evolve or to differentiate the professional needs within a staff. She felt this was the case with experienced teachers in the Napa Valley/Vacaville project. In that study the teachers advanced but the inservice program failed to accommodate their growth because it offered only a basic level of coaching. Wildman and Niles (1987A) also suggest that models of teaching which portray teaching as a technical process need to be challenged. While their research "suggests that the theme of teacher as a reflective professional should be pursued vigorously" (p.26), they have encountered definite obstacles. They found that individual teachers must be intrinsically motivated to be reflective. Observation skills and opportunities to analyze teaching are crucial, but current school conditions and professional attitudes are not always conducive to teacher observation or reflection. Their research showed the need to train teachers who would work collaboratively with their peers.

They reported that teachers showed a natural tendency to evaluate one another; hence, time for training programs and time to advance peer interaction to more advanced levels become basic concerns for would-be implementors.

Garmston (1987) supported Wildman and Niles' concerns when he suggested that technical forms of coaching had a tendency to be more evaluative than other forms. Garmston describes two other forms of coaching which teachers may utilize. He called these collegial and challenge coaching. The focus of collegial coaching originates with the teacher being observed, rather than with a teaching strategy learned in a workshop. The peer coach collects classroom data for the teacher; then the coach and teacher analyze and interpret it together before planning future strategies. This form of coaching is intended to "refine teaching practices, deepen collegiality, increase professional dialogue, and help teachers think more deeply about their work" (Garmston; 1987, p.20). Although collegial coaching represents another and not necessarily a higher stage of coaching than technical, Garmston implies that his third form, challenge coaching, does evolve from the other forms. This is because its prerequisites are collegiality, trust, and norms supporting problem solving. Challenge coaching generally involves small groups of teachers whose goal is to solve a mutual problem. Through discussion, they may develop an action plan, then test it in the classroom while peers observe and collect data. If the plan works, others adopt it; if it fails, either new plans are developed or the old ones are revised. This form of coaching appears to resemble action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986).

Training for Coaching. The need and nature of preparation for peer coaching is a second issue addressed in recent research and literature. Kent (1987) implies that peer coaching is facilitated if a spirit of collaboration is evident in the school or district. She describes criteria for judging a district's readiness for teacher collaboration, but comments that her experience has been that schools are not normally organized to provide conditions which will stimulate the professional growth of teachers. Consequently, teachers who initiate peer coaching projects without full staff participation often risk censure.

Little (1985) wrote of the delicacy of collegial leadership in describing her involvement with the Teacher Advisor Project in California. This project, which involved teachers advising teachers, revealed some of the difficulties which teachers encounter when they interact professionally with peers. Little has suggested six principles of peer advising which anyone planning the training program for coaches should consider, if not incorporate:

> 1. Skillful pairs agree on the importance of a common language and make a deliberate move to use shared ideas and language to describe, understand, and refine teaching.
> 2. Skillful pairs focus on one or two key questions, issues, situations, or problems and address them with depth, persistence, imagination and good humour.
> 3. Skillful pairs use a record of classroom interaction as a basis for generating questions, drawing conclusions, and pursuing alternatives. They work together to invent or select the observation methods that suit their purposes.
> 4. Skillful pairs engage in lively interaction with one another, making the conference a vehicle for joint work on teaching and an opportunity to improve their ability to learn from one another.
> 5. Skillful pairs build trust in one another's intentions by relying on a known, predictable set of topics, criteria, and methods.
> 6. Skillful pairs build trust by acknowledging and deferring to one another's knowledge and skill, by talking to each other in ways that preserve individual dignity, and by giving their work together a full measure of energy, thought, and attention. (ibid, p.35)

Implicit in these principles is the need for coaching skills and strategies for personal interaction which are meaningful, focused, facilitative, predictable, reciprocal, and which respect individual dignity.

Garmston (1987) states that training for coaching is essential but that the coaching skills taught must be appropriate for the kind of coaching used by teachers. Technical coaches must be trained to observe and collect data for specific teaching methodologies. They must also develop conference skills in order to provide feedback and positive reinforcement. Collegial coaches require additional training in interpersonal skills, particularly those which promote in-depth discussions and reflection. Garmston recommends that challenge coaching is most appropriate for small groups of teachers with prior experience in the other models. Challenge coaches need to be particularly skillful in problem-solving and interpersonal skills. Garmston sums up good training for any form of coaching:

> Good training uses the best available information about adult learning; provides teachers with theory, information and demonstrations; addresses teachers' concerns about giving and receiving feedback; and helps teachers develop and refine specific coaching skills. (p.26)

Showers (1985) recommends that the training of coaches be incorporated into the training of new instructional skills and strategies. This, of course, presupposes a technical form of coaching. Teachers can take turns practising observation, collecting data, and conferencing in small groups. A second phase of training for coaching should coincide with group meetings to discuss progress, or when a new teaching skill is introduced. At this point, perhaps three to six weeks after peer coaching actually began, teachers need to expand their coaching skills to enable peers to conduct collegial dialogues as well as to provide technical feedback. Showers maintains that the training of coaches should be a continuing activity, but one which requires decreasing emphasis as peers' skills improve and they become more autonomous. However, as Joyce (Brandt, 1987) points out, it is important to bring peer coaching staffs together at regular intervals to think about what they are doing.

The Role of Principals. Principals and other school administrators play a critical role in peer coaching as in the implementation of any educational innovation (Fullan, 1982). Their unique positions as educational leaders and gate-keepers make their involvement and support imperative to success. Garmston (1987) elaborates on several ways that administrators can support peer coaching. Selecting a coaching model which is congruent with school goals is a first priority. Next, principals must provide training in the model and see that coaching structures are defined with regard to conference formats, coaching schedules, and coaching content. Garmston reminds administrators that those who will be affected should be involved in making decisions about coaching structures. He agrees with Berman and McLaughlin (1978) that teacher participation in decisions concerning the implementation and continuance of an innovation is strongly correlated with the actual effective implementation. This is because teachers are in the best position to offer solutions to problems. Also, these researchers reported that where teachers felt ownership, there was a greater commitment of time and energy. Garmston claims that it is important for administrators to demonstrate that they value peer coaching by committing time and money to it and by giving it a high profile in staff meetings. Principals who model their own willingness to be observed and coached send a powerful message to staff that they value the process.

Joyce (Brandt, 1987) acknowledges that principals or supervisiors can act as either trainers or coaches, but he cautions that unless they are prepared to become as experienced and as skilled as teachers, they are "well advised to be facilitators of the process rather than coaches" (p.16). As peer coaching facilitators, principals must actively initiate staff programs which encourage and reward collaboration, remove obstacles to inter-class visitations, and develop an understanding among teachers of the benefits of such a process. Showers (1985) agrees that principals are in a unique position to influence building norms and to implement peer coaching through colloborative problem solving with their teachers:

> Principals must work to establish new norms that reward collegial planning, public teaching, constructive feedback, and experimentation.....Where coaching has flourished best, principals have taken active roles in helping teams form, supporting them, providing times in meetings for sharing of teaching and planning, and providing help for team leaders. (p.48)

Sparks and Bruder (1987) reported that teachers appreciated having their principals involved in the program. Grimmett et al (1985), who studied eight principals in one school district, observed that in those schools where peer coaching programs seemed successful, the principal played a role as a facilitator, motivator, and resource expert. Where principals failed to provide leadership and support, programs were less successful.

Both Showers (1985) and Garmston (1987) tackle the difficult question of principals' dual roles as coach and supervisor. They agree that it is possible to perform both roles if both teachers and principals see a clear separation of the roles, if trust exists between the parties, and if everyone is aware which role is being performed. However, Showers emphasizes that coaching and evaluation should not be undertaken concurrently because coaching implies assistance in a learning process whereas evaluation implies judgement about the adequacy of the person (Showers; 1985, p.46). Skill analysis, on the other hand, is an ongoing part of coaching. Teachers involved in peer coaching need substantial blocks of time to master skills before anyone in a supervisory capacity should consider evaluating them.

The Effects of Peer Coaching. The literature contains a number of references to the effects of peer coaching programs. Showers (1985) has suggested that the effects can be classified into two basic categories: the facilitation of transfer training, and the development of norms of collegiality and experimentation. Although not identified as such, a third category, personal growth, seems implicit. Servatius and Young (1985) studied the effects of coaching on experienced teachers in California. They observed that those teachers who received both training and coaching, implemented those skills properly and consistently. They were so impressed by the power of coaching that they commented:

> As a result of this experience, the [Educational Development Center] will never again wish to offer training that does not include the element of coaching. (p.53)

Other research by Baker (1983), Richardson (1984), Pusch et al (1985), Licklider (1986), and Bennett (1987) further attest to the power of coaching to affect transfer of training. Showers (1985) suggests that coaching contributes to the transfer of training because coached teachers:

> 1. Generally (though not always) practise new strategies more frequently and consequently develop a higher level of skill.
> 2. Use the new strategies more appropriately during instruction.
> 3. Retain their knowledge of a skill and the ability to apply it longer than uncoached teachers.
> 4. Are more likely to teach the strategy to their students. (p.45)

Little (1982) described norms of collegiality and experimentation as workplace conditions which contributed to school success. Ponzio (1987), who studied the effects of having a partner when teachers study their own teaching, found that "the most consistent and enthusiastic perceptions were the support and motivation the partnership provided, and best of all, a chance to talk about professional matters with a colleague" (p.23). Sparks and Bruder (1987) also reported that in their study of two elementary school staffs, teachers indicated that having another teacher as a professional colleague was one of the main benefits of the program. They also reported that participating teachers were more willing to try new ideas, teachers felt student performance improved, and opportunities for observing others teach and receiving feedback increased dramatically. In Licklider's (1986) investigation, teachers rated practising teaching skills as being most valuable; observing a colleague was second; receiving feedback from a colleague was rated third. Showers (1985) believes that the positive feelings generated by enhanced collegial ties will have far-reaching effects in schools:

> The development of school norms that support the continuous study and improvement of teaching apparently builds capabilities for other kinds of change, whether it is adoption of a new curriculum, a school-wide discipline policy, or the building of teaching repertoire. (p.46)

Implicit in some of these articles is the personal effect of peer coaching on individuals. Little (1985) refers to the ego-boosting effect of peer conferences. Pusch et al (1985) report that coached teachers felt they were more knowledgeable and had increased confidence in their teaching skills. Johnson and Johnson (1987) learned from their meta-analysis of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic work styles that cooperation among adults promoted achievement, positive interpersonal relations, social support, and self-esteem. Grimmett et al (1985) also reported that in schools where peer coaching had been successful, teachers mentioned "a greater number of intangible advantages relating to one's sense of self-worth and self-esteem" (p.84).

Hidden among the benefits to schools and individuals are concerns associated with peer coaching. Little (1984), whose earlier (1982) research brought attention to the importance of collegial norms, warns of seductive images and organizational realities in professional development.

> Conditions that are powerful enough to introduce new ideas and practices in classrooms and to sustain collegial relations among teachers require a degree of organization, energy, skill, and endurance often underestimated in summary reports. (p.84)

Like Fullan (1982), Little describes factors which increase the possibilities of successful staff development. A more recent synthesis of research on staff development written by Showers, Joyce, and Bennett (1987) also addresses basic issues regarding school innovation. These references, plus the Final Report by Grimmett et al (1985), discuss important implications for anyone involved with staff development and/or peer coaching.

Two areas of concern consistently reported in connection with peer coaching were time and initial anxiety. Some teachers in the study described by Grimmett et al (1985) reported that they found peer coaching initially threatening. They reported that the role played by the principal could either increase or decrease their anxiety. Joyce (Brandt, 1987) suggests that many teachers find "the prospect of peer coaching very scary" (p.13) because they are afraid they will not stand up to the comparison with their peers. Sparks and Bruder (1987) also found that teachers had concerns about evaluation. Joyce maintains that one way to overcome anxiety is to get teachers immediately involved in practice and observations so they can "get relaxed with their imperfections" (Brandt; 1987, p.13). Pusch et al (1985) also recommend that training begin immediately after group sessions. Joyce and Showers recommend that coaching be scheduled once per week (Garmston, 1987). However, regular sessions held frequently enough to maintain skills seems to be the important consideration.

The extent of the time commitment required for successful peer coaching has been frequently mentioned as a concern in the literature. Joyce and Showers (1983) estimate that the study of theory alone, requires twenty to thirty hours. In addition, teachers should participate in fifteen to twenty demonstrations and ten to fifteen classroom sessions before they can expect to have a high degree of skill. Although research projects seem to suggest these standards are rarely achieved, teachers and organizers still sometimes find the time commitment "burdensome" (Licklider, 1986). Ponzio (1987) found that finding time to work with a partner was a problem; teachers in the Grimmett et al (1985) study felt that peer coaching was "too time-consuming and called for an extended period of commitment":

> In addition, it called for work/effort and organization through all of its stages - from initial planning to feedback. Given the already hectic schedule of the classroom teacher, the process was an additionally demanding project, that interferred with other projects and priorities to which the teachers were already committed. (p.59)

Consequently these researchers implied that the process of implementing peer coaching must be "slow and gradual", a view shared by Little (1984). Yet, this pace only tempted teachers to "accelerate the process" (Grimmett et al; 1985).

Peer Coaching Models. The literature suggests that teachers are experimenting with many variations of professional or staff development which might be categorized as peer coaching. It seems fitting to conclude this review of the literature by sketching some of the current models.

In Edmonton, Alberta, Bentley (1987) describes how coaching is being used by instructional processes consultants to transfer instructional and class management skills to the classrooms of experienced teachers. A number of peer coaching projects have been spawned in schools as a result of this training.

Rogers (1987) describes how video cameras have been used to record lessons which were later analyzed collegially by several peers simultaneously. She found that video taping allowed teachers to monitor their own teaching; it provided an objective reference to comments made in coaching; it permitted small groups to participate in the coaching. Sparks and Bruder (1987) also used video cameras to provide an initial and final comparison of skill implementation among teachers participating in a peer coaching project. Their experience showed that many teachers enjoyed this aspect of the project.

Moffett et al (1987) describe a coaching program aimed specifically at teachers in their initial two years of teaching. Coaches were recruited from among the ranks of experienced teachers and given the same one week training in teacher effectiveness skills as the novices, plus additional training in communication skills. After practising in a school adjacent to the training site, coaches observed the teachers twice per month in their home schools. Coach and teacher relationships were kept low-key; monthly follow-up sessions were held for the teachers, while coaches met two to three times per year for additional training and discussions. The Teacher Advisor Program reported by Servatius and Young (1985) and by Little (1985) uses a similar model except that teachers are recruited to coach experienced as well as novice teachers. Both these models lack the reciprocity normally associated with peer coaching.

Neubert and Bratton (1987) report that scheduling problems prompted teachers who had been peer coaching to opt for a team coaching model. School-based consultants with flexible schedules and appropriate expertise were asked to facilitate teachers learning new writing skills by working collaboratively with teachers to plan, help teach, and evaluate lessons. Participants appreciated the assistance of a more knowledgeable coach but felt strongly that they did not want to be observed by someone who was neither a peer nor a practising teacher. However, these resource teachers fit the criteria and were deemed acceptable by the teachers in this study.

The Teacher Inquiry Projects described by Ponzio (1987) represent another model of peer coaching. In this model, teachers choose to collaborate on the study of their own teaching. Working as an autonomous unit, pairs of teachers select a topic of inquiry, arrange to observe one another teach, then discuss and reflect on the data collected. Rorschach and Whitney (1986) describe a comparable peer observation arrangement which they used to improve their university teaching. They felt their collaboratively designed classroom research projects offered "a method of faculty development for institutions which train teachers or want to support the improvement of teaching" (p.170).

Even principals are getting involved in peer coaching. Gibble and Lawrence (1987) describe an arrangement in Pennsylvania whereby principals observed one another conferencing a teacher, then coached one another regarding the conference. They did not report teachers' reactions to this project. In another example involving peers but no coaching, Kline (1987) describes how principals in Louisiana organized themselves into peer teams of seven members to visit each other's schools and discuss common problems. He reported that the increased feelings of mutual concern and support which this generated, helped create an atmosphere of greater collaboration in the district.

This literature review has attempted to reveal the underlying influences for professional development in teaching which are reflected in the current educational innovation called peer coaching. Probably through the current interest in this topic and efforts by writers such as Glatthorn (1987) to differentiate peer coaching from other peer-based teacher interactive models, peer coaching will continue to evolve in ways which will make it increasingly differentiated and accessible to the teachers for whom it is intended. In the meantime, there is a great deal to be learned and written on this subject. We can, however, agree with Showers (1985) that:

> At this stage, coaching is an innovation, subject to the same laws that govern any other change in an educational setting. It is also a community of learners engaged in a study of teaching, a set of technical moves embodied in training and follow-up to that training, and a support system that creates and sustains the learning community and enables it to function. (p.48)

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, RESEARCH PARADIGM, AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the characteristics of the conceptual framework of symbolic interactionism and the naturalistic research paradigm; then to show how they were combined in the methodology of this study. The chapter begins with an explanation of the key concepts of symbolic interactionism and a discussion of how it was used in the study. The second part of the chapter relates Guba's (1981) criteria for the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries to this study. The final part describes how naturalistic criteria and a symbolic interactionist conceptual framework have been combined in the methodological procedures used by the researcher during the course of this investigation.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a term first used by Herbert Blumer in a 1937 article. Blumer claims that although he initiated the term, the concept of social interactionism was originated by others. In his book Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method, Blumer acknowledges that many of his concepts are articulations of ideas proposed by G.H. Mead, although other notable scholars such as John Dewey, W.I. Thomas, Robert E. Park, and William James have used the theory of symbolic interaction. While this may be true, credit must go to Blumer for providing a comprehensive explanation of its conceptual framework.

Symbolic interactionism offers a scheme for understanding the meaning of social interaction for the individual, for individuals acting together in a group, and for individuals who have had both similar training and different life experiences. Since these parameters describe the circumstances in this project, the researcher used this conceptual framework in order to interpret the meaning which peer coaching held for the teachers in this study.

The section which follows attempts to explain the key ideas on which symbolic interactionism is based. The actual methodological techniques which the researcher must employ will be discussed in the section referred to as the research process.

Blumer (1969) has defined symbolic interaction as:

> ...the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or 'define' each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their 'response' is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. (pp.78-79)

Incorporated in this definition are three basic premises upon which, Blumer (1969, p.2) suggests, symbolic interactionism rests:

1. Human beings act toward things [objects, people, ideas] based on the meanings which the things have for them.

2. The meaning which things have for humans results from the social interaction one has with other persons.

3. Meanings are modified through an interpretative process which people use to deal with the world they encounter.

The premises emphasize the social nature of the theory; they also emphasize the importance of meaning. The actions of anyone toward anything will depend on the meaning which the person assigns to the thing. That meaning grows out of a context in which human interaction must play a role, even if that interaction is introspective. Meanings change and may evolve through a process of self-interaction in which "the actor selects, checks, suspends, regroups, and transforms the meanings in the light of the situation in which he is placed and the direction of his action" (ibid, p.5). This eventually leads to what Thomas (1972) called the definition of the situation. Waller (1970) elaborated on this concept, particularly with respect to schools. This important concept emphasizes that in order to understand the meaning of human conduct, the context in which it occurs must be understood from the perspective of the actor.

Defining the situation is one of several "sensitizing concepts" (Blumer, 1970) which provide a general sense of reference to those studying social interaction. Although they are implicit in earlier writing, Hewitt (1979) has named many of these concepts and provided an articulation of their characteristics. Biography, career, and setting, are examples of sensitizing concepts which individuals use to develop meaning from a context. Clearly, in symbolic interactionism, the past is linked to the present in the process of self-interaction. When individuals interpret that a set of standard expectations is associated with a context, Hewitt calls this a typification. If the assumptions are based on moral beliefs, then the concept is called normative standards; causality and means and ends concepts sensitize researchers to assumptions about how a person or thing affects another. The concept of substantive congruency is concerned with whether people's definitions of the situation agree. Another sensitizing concept is emotional response. Although emotions do not appear to figure extensively in symbolic interactionist literature, Cooley (1970) has explored this topic, particularly as it relates to self.

Social interaction occurs when individuals act together in society. Symbolic interactionism recognizes that social interaction is a process that shapes human conduct since individuals in groups have to both interpret the meanings of others and communicate their own meanings. Most of this communication occurs through symbolic actions or gestures such as language. Such symbolic interaction has meaning both for the person who makes the gesture and for the person to whom it is directed. The communication is most likely to be understood and joint action undertaken in a group or culture in which the members have similar backgrounds. Blumer emphasizes that for effective communication and symbolic interaction to occur, mutual role-taking is essential. Social interaction, therefore, involves the dual process of defining to others how to act and interpreting their actions. It naturally follows that the more one understands of the life-world of others and of the meanings which they attach to things, the better able one will be to take the other's role and interpret his/her meaning.

In symbolic interaction the person is conceived as dialoguing with self. The self is seen as an object with characteristics attributed to it by others. This process of internal dialogue, or making self-indications, plays a significant role in redefining personal meaning as well as engaging in joint action.

Joint or collective action is an outcome of a process of interpretative interaction in which participants make indications to each other in addition to themselves. This is sometimes referred to as negotiation (Hewitt, 1979). Joint action takes on a distinctive character because the individuals' common purposes, referred to as interlinkage of action, have a holistic meaning which is greater than the sum of their individual purposes. Blumer (pp.17-20) outlines three implications of joint action which will have a bearing on this research. The first implication is that in joint actions, which are either repetitive or stable, the participants often have a clear understanding of how to act in advance. Hewitt (1979) terms these typifications. Since the teachers in this study completed the Teacher Effectiveness Program offered by their school board, it was important to learn not only if their interpretations of peer coaching differ, but also what those interpretations are.

A second implication of joint action is closely related to the first because it claims that individuals in systems, such as teachers in schools, generally use symbols which carry common meanings for those in the situation. It is important to remember that in symbolic interaction theory, the network does not function because of its own dynamics, but because the people working in the system individually interpret common meanings from the situation and define their social interaction accordingly. This implies that part of the researcher's task was to recognize and to interpret how symbols, which are part of this teaching culture, influenced the social interaction between the teachers in the study.

The final implication for joint action emphasizes how critical it is for a researcher to become aware of the previous group experiences of the individual participants. It is only through learning their history that the meaning which joint action has for them can be understood. Consequently, the researcher attempted to learn from the key informants as much as possible about their previous group experiences in addition to their involvement in the Teacher Effectiveness Program and their current role as part of a staff project.

The Naturalistic Paradigm

Guba (1981) distinguishes between the naturalistic and the rationalistic paradigms of inquiry. The selection of one paradigm over the other for investigating a problem does not depend on the superiority of either paradigm. Each has its legitimate place in empirical inquiry. Instead, the selection should be made on the appropriateness of certain key assumptions to the problem being investigated. Guba (1981, pp.3-8) suggests that these assumptions concern the nature of reality, the nature of the inquirer/object relationship, the nature of truth statements, methods, quality criterion, source of theory, knowledge types used, instruments, design, and setting.

Characteristics of Naturalistic Research

Table 1 provides a brief comparison of the key assumptions held by the rationalistic and the naturalistic paradigms. It is not my intention to develop the comparison further since the naturalistic paridigm of inquiry has been selected as being more appropriate for an investigation of this nature. Instead, this section examines the ten assumptions of the naturalistic paradigm as they apply to the study.

The Nature of Reality. Over the five-month period of the study, the reality of peer coaching for these three teachers was affected by many situations, people, and conditions, both remembered and experienced. The reality of the situation was both personal and multi-dimensional to each of them. The researcher's task was to describe this reality in all its complexity and variety, but not by taking the experience apart as one might disassemble a quilt. Instead, by describing the wholeness of the situation with its rich description, the investigator sought to provide vitality and a sense of reality to others.

Table 1

A Comparison of Key Assumptions
In the Rationalistic and Naturalistic Paradigms *

Assumptions	Rationalistic	Naturalistic
THE NATURE OF REALITY	focus on single variables	multiple realities exist
THE NATURE OF THE INQUIRER/OBJECT RELATIONSHIP	independence	acknowledges interdependence
THE NATURE OF TRUTH STATEMENTS	generalizations possible	working hypotheses possible
METHODS	preference for quantitative data	preference for qualitative data
QUALITY CRITERION	rigor	relevance
SOURCE OF THEORY	deductive	inductive or "grounded"
KNOWLEDGE TYPES USED	propositional	tacit and propositional
INSTRUMENTS	tests, machines, etc. (measureable)	researcher
DESIGN	advance design (a priori)	emergent design
SETTING	controlled (as in laboratory)	natural, uncontrolled

* Adapted from Guba (1981)

The Nature of the Inquirer/Object Relationship. The naturalistic paradigm recognizes that the inquirer and the respondents must interact and that in so doing each influences the other. The researcher made every effort to see the world and interpret it from the perspective of these elementary teachers. This was so that the meaning which words or situations had for them could be given accurate interpretation and description. At the same time, the researcher attempted to maintain his own perspective as an inquirer (Wilson, 1977).

The Nature of Truth Statements. The researcher in a naturalistic study is not out to prove the truth of a principle someone has previously expounded. Instead the hope is to describe a situation in such detail that others who read about it can easily recognize similarities and differences in situations they have experienced or may encounter. Out of these very specific contexts the best that can be hoped for are working hypotheses, the truth of which will be highly context dependent. Guba (1981, p.4) suggests that "human behavior is rarely, if ever, context-free; hence knowledge of human behavior individually or in social groups is necessarily ideographic, and differences are at least as important as similarities to an understanding of what is happening."

Methods. Naturalistic researchers have generally preferred to use what are often called qualitative methods, while rationalists have selected quantitative ones. Each methodology, Guba suggests, is applicable to either paradigm, yet the practice of referring to qualitative or quantitative research rather than methodology implies a correspondence between the paradigm and a methodology. Examples of qualitative methods which were employed in this study included participant observation, unstructured interviewing, taking fieldnotes, collecting relevant documents, and keeping a journal. These methods of data collection permitted the researcher to produce descriptions which portrayed the thoughts and actions of the respondents.

Quality Criterion. Naturalistic research sometimes appears "messy" because it attempts to describe all aspects of what is happening. Yet, that is what makes this paradigm relevant to school investigations (Bolster, 1983). Teachers live cluttered, context-rich lives. To ignore parts of this existence would be to ignore their reality and defeat the purpose of the research. For this study to be valid, it must reflect the human situation which is always relevant to other humans.

Source of Theory. This study collected data from three teachers, each of whom is unique. It would be naive to attempt to generalize from these teachers to teachers in general. Nor did the researcher begin this study with previously held principles against which the data of this study were compared. Working hypotheses which were generated by the data attempt to explain only the phenomena observed in this study. Each case brings its uniqueness, but at the same time, comparisons may ultimately be possible because of common themes with other cases. As individual hypotheses, derived inductively in particular cases, find correspondence in other cases, grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) can be developed.

Knowledge Types Used. Both propositional and tacit forms of knowledge were used in this study. Tacit knowledge such as intuitions, apprehensions, and feelings revealed the meaning which peer coaching held for these teachers. Propositional knowledge such as in written and spoken language, also provided valuable data for the researcher.

Instruments. In research which purports to investigate the subjectivity of another human being, the key instrument must be another person with whom the respondents have established rapport and to whom they are willing to enter into an ongoing dialogue (Wolcott,1975). An empathetic, sensitive researcher who has made it his or her business to learn a great deal about the perspectives of the respondents is far better able to project their experience of peer coaching than any device prepared for that purpose. Consequently, the researcher was the critical instrument in this research project.

Design. One of the challenging yet frustrating aspects of naturalistic research is that the researcher cannot control the events being investigated. Instead, the researcher's task is to identify the phenomena to be studied, then convince the academic community that he is versed in an appropriate conceptual framework and methodology to collect and interpret the data. The dissertation proposal identified the focus of the investigation, and, hopefully, the competence of the investigator to complete the task. That proposal did not commit the researcher to a rigid plan. Rather it was a commitment to embark with sensitivity and flexibility on a journey in which the traveller promised to describe what life was like for those with whom he shared experiences along the way.

Setting. Many of the previous assumptions of the naturalistic paradigm imply that the research setting must be a natural one. What could be more natural to other teachers than a study of experienced teachers in an elementary school in a suburb of a city the size of Edmonton. Despite their uniqueness, these three women share a setting which, in general terms, is repeated thousands of times in this country alone. To attempt to control or change what these teachers normally do or think in going about their jobs would destroy the naturalness which makes this kind of research relevant and powerful to educators. Bolster (1983) believes it is important for researchers to conduct educational research in ways which are compatible with teachers' perspectives:

> The most important elements of any social situation are the shared meaning which participants take from the process of interaction and which ultimately shape their behaviour. Significant knowledge of any social situation, therefore, consists of an awareness of the emerging meanings that participants are developing and the specific ways that the meanings are functioning to shape their endeavors and thus the characteristics of the situation itself. (p.303)

As recently as 1986 Wideen and Holborn, in their survey of research in Canadian teacher education, encouraged support for and expansion of qualitative research in education. At this university a succession of studies in education by Boyce (1982), Craig (1984), Everett-Turner (1985), Hawke (1980), Tardif (1985) and the recent, multi-site Teacher Perspectives Research Project (Blakey et al, 1987) have established the value of naturalistic inquiries in education. This study continues in this growing tradition.

Concerns About the Trustworthiness of Data

Questions sometimes arise about the internal or external validity, the reliability, or the objectivity of naturalistic research. Therefore, this section addresses concerns which the reader may have about the trustworthiness of the data.

Guba (1981) maintains that validity, reliability, and objectivity are scientific terms which belong within the rationalistic paradigm. Instead he argues convincingly that credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are more appropriate terms to use whenever questions about the trustworthiness of naturalistic research are asked. The researcher considers Guba's discussion of how to conduct trustworthy research in the naturalistic paradigm a succinct and useful summary of similar points made in other sources (Agar, 1980; Blumer, 1969; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Geertz, 1964, 1979; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Spradley, 1979; Wax, 1971; Wolcott, 1975). The following section relies heavily on Guba's "Criteria for Assessing the Trustworthiness of Naturalistic Inquiries" (1981). This investigation employed many of the methodological procedures outlined by Guba. In addition to explaining the value of particular ethnographic techniques, this discussion also serves to reinforce the point that the naturalistic paradigm is consistent within its own frame of reference.

Table 2 permits an easy comparison of the naturalistic and scientific terms and relates them to the four aspects of trustworthiness which have been identified by Guba: truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality.

Table 2

Scientific and Naturalistic Terms Appropriate To The Aspects of Trustworthiness (Guba, 1981)

Aspect	Scientific Term	Naturalistic Term
Truth Value	Internal Validity	Credibility
Applicability	External Validity Generalizability	Transferability
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability

Credibility. Truth value is the first aspect of trustworthiness suggested by Guba. It asks how do we know that the researcher's data represents the truth about what occurred. The naturalistic term credibility implies that the researcher's task is to show that the data is believable because the thoroughness and total integrity of the description enables the reader to get a complete understanding of the event. To accomplish this, Guba indicates the importance of a prolonged engagement at the site, and of persistent observation during the period of data collection. Peer debriefing, triangulation, collecting related documents, and checking the meaning of transcripts with respondents also add credibility to the data. During data analysis, checking for coherence between different kinds of data, testing interpretations against one's data, and obtaining respondents' reactions to the report in its draft form provide further checks of credibility.

Transferability. Applicability, the second aspect of trustworthiness, concerns itself with the degree to which the findings of one study may be applied to another context. The naturalistic term suggested by Guba is transferability. It implies that a naturalistic researcher "does not attempt to form generalizations that will hold in all times and in all places, but [attempts] to form working hypotheses that may be transferred from one context to another depending on the degree of 'fit' between the contexts" (p.11). The transferability of a study will be enhanced if the researcher collects what ethnographers refer to as thick description (Geertz, 1973). Such ethnographic description attempts to interpret social discourse in understandable terms. Thick description "sorts winks from twitches and real winks from mimicked ones" (Geertz; 1973, p. 16). This means the researcher must not only have a scrupulous eye for detail, but he must also be aware of what Geertz (1979) called deep structure. Understanding deep structure is analagous to understanding the meaning of a poem or proverb. The researcher's thick description should permit the reader to both visualize the context and to grasp the meaning.

Dependability. Consistency, Guba's third aspect of trustworthiness, asks whether another study conducted under similar circumstances would produce similar results. Since in naturalistic studies it is impossible to repeat a study under identical circumstances, dependability, rather than reliability, is the preferred term. The researcher's responsibility is to show the steps taken at various points in the data collection and analysis so that others wishing to follow the pattern can do so. Guba (p. 21) calls this leaving an audit trail. Dependability is further enhanced if the researcher, after data analysis is completed, asks someone familiar with ethnographic procedures to do a dependability audit to determine whether acceptable practices have been followed.

Confirmability. Neutrality, the fourth aspect of trustworthiness suggested by Guba, is concerned with the degree to which the findings of a study truly reflect the experiences of the key informants rather than the biases of the researcher. Wilson (1977) noted that there may be concern that the data will be "polluted with the observer's subjective bias". Wilson (p.258) called for "a technique of disciplined subjectivity that is as thorough and intrinsically objective as any kind of research." This, he felt, could be accomplished through the tension experienced when researchers must take both the insider's perspective and yet maintain their own. Guba specifically pointed to two steps which the naturalistic researcher can take in the interests of confirmability. Triangulation, which was earlier suggested as enhancing credibility, also supports confirmability because it forces the researcher to collect and examine data from a variety of sources and perspectives. Practising reflexivity by keeping a journal is another way of becoming aware of the researcher's orientation.

Guba (p.28) warns that the naturalistic paradigm has certain inherent dangers for the researcher because it is open-ended and intially design-less, and because it has an emergent quality. Hence it cannot expect to enjoy the same guarantee of trustworthiness enjoyed by a rationalistic theory. One cannot muster evidence that will compel another to accept the trustworthiness of the study, but one can provide evidence that will persuade the other of its relative trustworthiness.

Guba suggests that some ethnographic procedures should be considered essential; others are desirable. To achieve credibility he suggests that triangulation and member checks are essential; for transferability - thick description; for dependability - leaving an audit trail;

and for confirmability, both triangulation and practising reflexivity are considered minimums.

Wilson (1977) attests to his faith in naturalistic research when he says that:

> The methodology of ethnographic researchers is as rigorous and systematic as that of other researchers. It is a vital and viable tradition which is constantly in the process of being evaluated and refined.... Ethnography is not a new fad; rather it is part of a long-respected research tradition that for various historical reasons has remained outside the mainstream of educational research. (pp. 261-263)

Mindful of the advice of Guba and the enthusiasm of Wilson, the researcher attempted to follow those precedures which are in keeping with the naturalistic paradigm and were deemed appropriate for this particular investigation.

Methodological Procedures

This section of Chapter 3 is intended to describe the methodological procedures used by the researcher in the course of this investigation. It attempts to show how the conceptual framework of symbolic interactionism and basic principles of naturalistic research outlined by Guba have been combined. The section is divided into four parts: subject identification and gaining entry, participant observation, data collection, and data analysis. The first person pronoun 'I' has been used in this section because of the researcher's immediate involvement and his belief that the readability will be increased by its use.

Subject Identification and Gaining Entry

The choice of topic for this study was made in the winter of 1987 and subject identification began in the spring of that year. I approached the director of the instructional processes consultants at Edmonton Public School Board and received permission to observe a consultant coaching a TEP graduate who was in turn coaching a peer on staff. This experience acted somewhat as a pilot project because it provided insight into possible research conditions, potential formats for data collection, and the overall viability of the project. Subsequently I met with four instructional processes consultants who were attached to the Teacher Effectiveness Program. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the proposed study and to ask for their help in identifying possible subjects. As a result of this meeting, three possible schools were investigated and a tentative commitment was made to conduct the research in a suburban school which had plans to involve its whole staff in a year-long peer coaching project. During the summer months, the study was approved by the university ethics committee and permission to conduct research in 'Forest Grove Elementary School' was obtained from the Edmonton Public School Board.

In late August, I contacted the school principal and met with her for a second time to discuss her plans and how the study could be accommodated. During the two days prior to the return of students, I had an opportunity to meet the staff of the school, to explain the proposed study, and to ask for two volunteers who met the criteria of being experienced teachers and graduates of the Teacher Effectiveness Program.

At this point, although the location for the study had been identified, the actual teachers with whom I would be working had not. With the exception of the principal and assistant principal, the Forest Grove teachers did not seem to have prior knowledge that they would be invited to participate in a research project. The first two days at the school consisted primarily of explaining who I was and what I proposed to study. When not at staff meetings, I tried to become acquainted with the staff, learn names, and become familiar with the plan of the school. Despite being pre-occupied with school opening preparations, the staff seemed interested and friendly. They made me feel welcome. The secretary arranged for a mailbox for me so that I could receive staff memoranda and have a means of receiving communications from others.

After being present for the first two days prior to school opening, I returned to Forest Grove on the Thursday of the first week of school. On Thursdays the school dismissed at 2:30, one hour earlier than normal; hence this early-dismissal day was selected for peer coaching activities. It was on the first Thursday after school began that I learned that Rose and Mary had offered to participate in the study. I met with them after school that afternoon to get acquainted and to discuss how I could fit in with their plans. I explained the purpose of the study and asked them to consider keeping a journal of their reflections on peer coaching. I gave each a coiled notebook and a sheet of suggestions on journal-keeping (shown in Appendix A). I made it clear that the choice of whether or not to keep a journal was entirely theirs. I said that I planned to keep a peer coaching journal in which I would reflect on each session. I intended to share this with each of them in order to establish a means of communication and to raise questions which could be discussed when time for interviews became available.

Although my study focused on the teachers themselves, they suggested, and I agreed, that I should become familiar with their classes prior to the first actual coaching session. Consequently, I spent time in each class, speaking to the children and showing them pictures of my home province and the school where I worked. During the three week period prior to the commencement of coaching, I visited both Rose and Mary in their homes and interviewed them about their early experiences, their career development, and other significant life experiences. These interviews became the basis for the biographical descriptions contained in Chapter 4.

During this period of gaining entry to Forest Grove School, I also became part of a teacher effectiveness class offered to teachers at the school district's Centre for Education. Four teachers from Forest Grove School and I became part of a group of twenty-five persons who began the first of seven half-day and two full-day sessions in September. There were several advantages to joining this group. It enabled me to be exposed to a program similar to the one attended by Rose and Mary the previous year. I was fortunate that the group I joined was led by the person who had also been their consultant. This probably meant my experience was somewhat similar to theirs with respect to handouts and program emphases. Unlike the teachers, I could not participate directly in the coaching program. However, during the fall, I was able to spend a morning with the consultant and watch while he observed and conferenced two of the teachers in our class.

The inclusion of four Forest Grove teachers in the class also provided an opportunity not only to share their experiences of the TEP but also to gain insights into their perspectives regarding the school peer coaching project. Participation in this teacher effectiveness class which continued until May, was helpful both in preparing the description of the TEP included in Chapter 4 and in understanding the TEP concepts and terminology as they were used and applied by the Forest Grove staff.

Participant Observation

My role in this study has been that of a participant-as-observer (Gold,1970). Gold outlines four theoretical roles which a field worker can assume: complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, and complete observer. The participant-as-observer role is the one generally associated with the term participant observation. It indicates that both the field worker and the informants are aware that theirs is a field relationship which will end with the project. The aim of the researcher assuming this role is to establish what Gold (p. 376) calls intimate content while avoiding intimate form. This means to be able to interact with informants as a colleague without losing a researcher's perspective or "going native". A participant-as-observer stance allows the flexibility which the researcher needs to adapt to changing research situations. Clifford Geertz (1979), an anthropologist, cautions that you do not have to "go native" to understand the native. He suggests that the trick of deciphering all the symbols so that you can figure out what people think they are up to, calls for an experience-near, experience-far perspective. The role of participant observer offered that possibility.

Data Collection

Data collection began on June 18, 1987 with an entry in my personal journal describing my first visit to Forest Grove School and the substance of an informal interview with the principal. Formal collection continued until February 4, 1988 when I recorded a discussion of peer coaching with the four Forest Grove teachers in the TE Program. Most of the data were collected during the four-month period from September 3, 1987 until December 17, 1987. Several means of data collection were used in the study: interviews and taped conversations, reflective journals, fieldnotes and collected documents. Let us examine the role each of these played in data collection.

Interviews and Taped Conversations. Interviews and taped conversations generated the greatest amount of data in this study. Approximately four hundred pages of typed transcriptions were produced in addition to outlines of conversations which it was judged did not warrant total transcription. These data have been organized so that all conversations with a person or group are together. Most of the quotations in chapters 4, 5, and 6 are from these sources. Each is indicated by a simple page reference; usually the speaker is also identified.

Interviews served several critical purposes in this investigation. Initially, I used semi-structured interviews to collect biographical data on Rose and Mary. When Margie became part of the study in October, further interviews were necessary. Interviews were invaluable for checking with the teachers regarding the meaning of a journal entry or to confirm my interpretation of one teacher's definition of herself to the other. As Agar (1980) has pointed out, the variety and flexibility of interviews place them in a symbiotic relationship with observation because both interact to clarify, expand, analyze, and make comprehensible the words and actions of the subjects. It was often impossible to obtain answers at the time a question arose. Hence, fieldnotes were essential to coordinate observations with later interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted with individual informants. Yet, on several occasions, both teachers were together, as in November when I checked whether the emerging themes had special meaning for them.

Taped conversations also constituted a major source of data. Each of the peer coaching sessions involved a significant conversation because it was during these occasions or during informal conversations immediately following that the teachers defined their positions on issues related to goals or the form their interactions would take. These sometimes subtle negotiations often happened quickly, but they often represented the basis for later re-definitions and the eventual form of accommodation shown in joint action.

Reflective Journals. Reflective journals represented a second important source of data. I kept a personal journal which encompassed all aspects of the study - the coaching peers, the staff project, and my involvement in the TEP. In computer parlance, it acted as a central processing unit which enabled me to make sense of the various sources of data and to plan future strategy. Unanswered questions, possible insights, hypotheses, and self-reminders were all part of this journal. Altogether, it comprised approximately one hundred fifty-five pages written in long-hand. Although this log-like document is of great importance to me, direct quotations from it are rare. Any which appear were indicated with a 'J' followed by the journal page reference.

In addition to a personal project journal, I kept a peer coaching journal which I shared with the two teachers who had allowed me to be part of their peer coaching session. Initially this was Rose and Mary; later it was Rose and Margie. They in turn, were invited to keep a journal of their own and share it as they saw fit. Both Rose and Mary chose to do this; Margie declined. I prepared a sheet which attempted to answer five questions which I felt the women would have about using a journal: What is it? Do I have to keep a journal? What do I put in it? What is most important? Do I have to share it? The complete text is shown in Appendix A. It describes a journal as a diary which can be used to record one's personal journey through the experience of peer coaching. Its purpose was described as encouraging the teacher to reflect on what is happening at a time when she is not bothered by other pressures.

These personal journals proved to be a valuable source of insight into the feelings of Rose and Mary during the project. They also acted as a means by which I could raise questions which they could ponder before a future interview.

Normally I made my journal entries within a day of the peer coaching session. The pages were then photocopied and left in each teacher's mailbox the following week when I was in the school. Generally, photocopies of the teachers' journals were waiting in my box.

Several direct quotations from the peer coaching journals have been used in the text. As the photocopies were filed with the fieldnotes, they have been designated as FN, followed by the page reference.

Fieldnotes and Collected Documents. In situations when it was inappropriate or undesirable to use audio-tape, I either made fieldnotes or mental notes which could be jotted down at the earliest convenience. I took fieldnotes during the observation part of peer coaching, then combined these with audio recordings during the conference which followed. Fieldnotes were taken at staff meetings, not to make an accurate record of everything that occurred, but rather to gain an impression of how the three teachers interacted with their peers on staff, to obtain a sense of the staff priorities, and to observe how the staff operated as a group of professionals under the leadership of the principal. Data collected in this manner was useful to write the description of Forest Grove School in Chapter 4.

Fieldnotes were used to note significant conversations which could not be audio-taped. These were my only means of recording conversations with the school principal. In her position as instructional leader and peer coaching coordinator, the school principal appeared to have a significant impact on the teachers and played a key role in the case study. I did not fully anticipate this prior to the onset of the project and failed to invite her to participate directly in the study. Her busy schedule and private disposition made brief contacts and hastily scribbled notes the only way to record her perspective on the peer coaching project.

Collected documents represent a final source of data. These consisted of items which were normally distributed to the staff within the school context. Important examples included the parent handbook sent home with each student in September and memoranda which included peer coaching items sent to the teachers by the principal.

Although there are few direct references to either fieldnotes or collected documents in the text, they provided the basis for much of the description in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Altogether one hundred forty-two pages of fieldnotes were recorded and numerous documents collected. Direct references to fieldnotes have been designated as FN followed by the fieldnote page reference. Collected documents can be identified by CD followed by the date of acquisition.

A Typical Day. Once peer coaching began on October 1st, a fairly regular pattern of data collection was established which continued until December 3rd. Every Thursday when peer coaching was scheduled, I arrived at Forest Grove at noon. This provided an opportunity to check my mailbox, to speak with the teachers to insure plans had not changed, and to eat lunch and chat with those frequenting the staff room. During the hour between the end of the lunch period and peer coaching, I sometimes had an opportunity to speak to the principal or one of the other teachers. I also used this time to read through staff memoranda or returned journal entries from Rose or

Mary. During the observation part of peer coaching, I took fieldnotes which described whether the teacher had made changes to the normal pattern, the form of the teaching, and the actions of the observer. During the conference, I normally sat somewhat back from the table shared by the teachers. In addition to recording on audio-tape every conference, I made fieldnotes both as a back-up to the tape and as a means of capturing symbolic gestures and recording observations.

After four of the five sessions, other staff commitments made it impossible to discuss and collect the reactions of the participants. On several occasions, I did interview after the second meeting, but I felt uncomfortable doing this because of the time of day. Other times had to be arranged for interviews. Often these occurred after meetings on the Thursday between coaching sessions or on a meeting-free day after school.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began in a minor way as data collection proceeded throughout the fall. This was particularly evident in my personal journal where questions emerged as I attempted to reflect on the reactions of the teachers. In mid-October a section of my journal records comments regarding a long list of what I termed "themes identified by osmosis prior to complete re-reading" (J p.55). This list included such topics as time, stress, communication, and the conferencing format. Other themes related to the personalities of the three teachers. As I re-read all the data to that date, specific questions emerged from the data. These were recorded and followed up in the following weeks. Interviews with various teachers sometimes provided personal interpretations which were significant for their individuality. An example of one such question was illustrated in the variety of responses I received when I tried to discover how the peer coaching project began at Forest Grove School. That there was no clear concensus as to how this occurred illustrated the subjective perspective which is a characteristic of naturalistic research.

In mid-November I first discussed with Rose and Margie some of the meanings which I felt they were projecting regarding their peer coaching experiences. Their comments and the discussion of terms added further detail to a scheme of meaning which eventually became the peer coaching model discussed in chapter 6. After that November discussion, I tried to explore relationships among these meanings and generate from the data, characteristics of these peer coaching elements. By January 24th, the actual diagram emerged, but it was not until March 19th that all the terms and relationships seemed to fit comfortably together.

In addition to the triangulation between the various forms of data and the member checks with key informants, two people who were not directly connected with the study raised questions which acted as a form of accountability for me. One was my research advisor who met with me at regular intervals to discuss progress and to ask perceptive questions. Although he has not had direct access to the data, his persistent probing and astute observations have helped to alert me to various methodological considerations.

Another person who has provided an additional perspective on the data has been a second reader who has read both the original data and the written text. In late November this person read collected data and juxtaposed her impressions with my own. Prior to the completion of the final text, this process was repeated, only this time the reader related data to text.

After the staff evaluation of peer coaching on January 7th, I began the process again of re-reading all the data collected to that point and organizing it so that it would be more accessible when actual writing began. My journal entry of January 20th, noted, "In the interest of leaving an audit trail, I will try to jot brief daily notes regarding my steps at data analysis, etc." (J p.122). In the days which followed, it described my efforts to bring the various themes into a coherent focus and to organize the data. After re-reading selected literature on data analysis, I rejected a cut-and-paste method in favour of a modified card file system. This involved the use of a three-ringed binder organized into such categories as Rose, Mary, Margie, TEP, and Forest Grove School. These categories eventually became the basis for Chapter 4. As I read through the data, I highlighted and classified significant bits of data, then wrote succinct annotations on loose-leaf sheets with the source page reference. After this was completed, I went through each category making a list of possible headings. These headings were further consolidated until all relevant data was classified. Each of these headings was assigned a coding number. For example, in the category called "Rose", I identified nineteen different coded headings. Then I went back over all the annotated notes on data and assigned a code number to each. Sometimes one note might have two or even three code numbers beside it. At the same time that I assigned codes to the data, I recorded the data source and page number under the code heading on a master sheet. Occasionally one code heading would include a number of sub-headings, as was the case with peer coaching. Again, to use the 'Rose' data as an example, references by Rose to peer coaching were categorized under code number 15. Within this group, eleven further sections, identified as 15A to 15K were used to organize further the material.

This code 15 was used to identify data on peer coaching for each of the teachers. Hence, when it came time to write Chapters 5 and 6, the references were easily accessible.

The master code sheets for each major category previously mentioned, acted like a switchboard for the actual writing process. From it, I could get direct access to what the data indicated various people had said or done to suggest the meaning they attributed to peer coaching. This, of course, was the whole thrust of Chapter 6.

A final but important stage of data analysis has involved taking completed sections of Chapters 4, 5, and 6 to the teachers for their reactions. This began about the end of February and continued into early April. In several cases teachers made their statements more precise or clarified interpretations. In only one instance, a lengthy section was removed at the principal's request because she felt its description of her administrative style exceeded the research boundaries initially negotiated. This section represented another of the contextual elements described in Chapter 4. Its inclusion would have enriched the description of the roles played by the Forest Grove principal in the peer coaching project. However, I believe that enough of this person's involvement is reflected in Chapter 5 to gain a sense of it. This adaptation acts as a reminder that in naturalistic research, the investigator cannot always anticipate the reactions of others to the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEFINING THE SITUATION: CONTEXTUAL ELEMENTS

Chapter 4 is based on data collected over a five-month period. It describes the elements of the study - the people and the context in which they interact. It describes the significant early experiences of three teachers, their career development, and how they see themselves and are seen by their peers. It also describes the school in which they teach and have a common group experience. Pseudonyms have been used to disguise the identities of the people and the school.

This study attempts to convey the meaning which three teachers at Forest Grove Elementary School in Edmonton, Alberta, gave to their experience of peer coaching. Each of these teachers brings her own biography to the setting and this constitutes an important element for defining the situation and in creating meaning for that person. Consequently the first three elements in the presentation of the data are the biographies of Rose Thompson, Mary Michaels, and Margie Young.

The immediate context in which these teachers interacted was Forest Grove Elementary School. Peer coaching was undertaken as a staff project and the data attempts to reflect both the development of the project and the meaning it had for the individuals involved. The interactions among the teachers will be more meaningful if their actions can be interpreted within the staff context in addition to the context of their early influences described in their biographies. Therefore, the fourth section of this chapter describes the multi-faceted element which we are calling Forest Grove Elementary School.

Another element which significantly influenced how each of the teachers initially defined peer coaching was their individual experiences of the district's Teacher Effectiveness Program. A description of this program and various teachers' emotional responses to it constitute the fifth and final element of this chapter.

Rose Thompson

Rose Thompson is an enthusiastic woman in her late forties who teaches grade one at Forest Grove Elementary School. She came to the school when it opened, but her teaching career of over twenty years began much earlier. Her biography and career development represent two symbolic interactionist sensitizing concepts of the data which provide a framework for describing and explaining how she defines herself, how she defines the situations, and how she interprets others.

Early Influences

Rose grew up on a farm in central Saskatchewan. Her parents were German immigrants with strong religious convictions. From grades one to four, she and her sister attended a little country school. In fine weather, this meant a two-mile walk each way. Beginning in grade five, they travelled twelve miles by bus to the nearest town. When roads were blocked by snow, the sisters had a rough, smelly ride in a bombardier. One feature of those years which Rose remembers was the lack of academic incentive at the school. Her parents, however, did not share that point of view:

> They really wanted us to do well and they encouraged us and almost coerced and forced at times to get us to study. As teenagers we rebelled, because the other kids were out having a good time and we weren't allowed to do that. We were supposed to be studying. Nobody at school seemed to care if we studied or not. So we were caught between a rock and a hard place. My teen years were a real struggle for me. (pp.4-5)

Another vivid memory which Rose has of those years in rural Saskatchewan, centres on her family's religious beliefs:

> I was brought up in a home where very strong Christian values were emphasized and that caused a bit of a problem at school in that my sister and I did not participate in a lot of things that the other kids participated in.... As a result I really have empathy for kids like Jehovah's Witnesses and

> children who are not allowed to take part in things because of their parents' beliefs. (p.3)

Becoming a Teacher

Rose wanted to be a nurse but learned to her chagrin that she lacked the required science courses. Since her sister and a good friend were going to Teachers' College in Saskatoon, she decided to go as well. Reflecting on this decision, Rose suggested that "God never makes any mistakes in our life, and there was a purpose for all of it" (p.5). Her belief in pre-destination has supported her through the many moves she has made in her life. Teachers' College and Saskatoon hold wonderful memories for Rose. This was her first opportunity to interact with children younger than herself, and she 'loved' student teaching.

After one year, she graduated and was hired over the telephone to teach grades three and four in a four-room school near Moose Jaw. Rose's recollections of her first year of teaching capture some of her excitement:

> It really was a thrilling and exciting year. I tried more things that year than I've ever tried since. There were nights that I had to scrub the classroom floor afterwards because the kids made such a mess. It was really rewarding and I knew that I had done what I really should be doing in life. (p.8)

Marriage and Grade One

After one year in Moose Jaw, Rose and two friends returned to Teachers' College to obtain their standard certificates. Teaching jobs in Medicine Hat, then Calgary, followed. It was during this period that she met and married her husband, Rob, the son of the pastor who had come to Rose's home community during her teacher-training years. Since Rob, a secondary school teacher, could only find a position teaching grade four in Calgary, they opted to return to university in Saskatoon. During the next three years Rob completed a bachelor's degree and Rose taught grade three. She fondly remembers that during this period the discomfort of tight budgeting was balanced by the new experiences of matrimony and of entering her classes in competitive music festivals. She also learned something about teaching which has become one of her beliefs: "that with a bit of encouragement and a bit of enthusiasm from the teacher, you can get kids to do almost anything." (p.12)

Following Rob's graduation, the Thompsons moved to Kindersley, Saskatchewan where an innovative philosophy was being implemented in the high school. Rose was promised a job in grade three, but through an error, her position was switched with the grade one teacher:

> That is how I got into grade one and again, I believe this was no mistake, no accident, because by Christmas time of that year I realized that teaching grade one was probably the most exciting thing that anyone can ever do in their life. We were in that town for three years, and by the time we left Kindersley, I knew I would never teach anything else. Grade one was going to be it forever. (p.14)

New Experiences Lead to Edmonton

When the experiment in Rob's school turned sour, Rose and Rob moved to Eugene, Oregon, where they both studied for two years, Rob obtaining his doctoral degree, and Rose completing both her B.Ed. degree and a master's degree in early childhood education:

> That was the route I pursued - the early childhood route because I wanted to find out about this business of language acquisition and all of the linguistic connotations of teaching kids how to read. I wanted to know all of this so I could come out a better grade one teacher. I learned it through experience in Kindersley, but I was flying by the seat of my pants. (p.16)

From Oregon, Rob's expertise led him to a job in Dallas, Texas, but left Rose unemployable as an "alien wife". Misunderstandings over obtaining a visa extension made it necessary for Rose and her husband to sell their house in Dallas and return unexpectedly to Saskatchewan eight months later. Jobs were hard to find, but Rob got a temporary teaching position at the University of Saskatchewan and Rose fulfilled a lingering desire by working in the diamond department of Birks' Jewellers. It was fun but she felt that the salary was ridiculously low. Rose returned to education when she was offered a one-year position teaching two education curriculum courses to second-year undergraduates taking majors in early childhood at the University of Saskatchewan. Rose regards teaching future teachers as "another real milestone in my whole teaching career" (p.21):

> Those kids absolutely loved those classes. I got so much positive feedback from those students, it gave me a real high. I loved it, but I knew it was only a term appointment and I would only be teaching at the university for one year. (p.22)

The following year Rose taught for the Saskatoon Public School Board, but when Rob was not offered tenure at the university, an opening with the Department of Education in Edmonton brought them once again to Alberta. Rose was offered a position teaching kindergarten, but held out for grade one. She got it.

> I've been here ever since and Edmonton has probably been the highlight of my whole teaching career. You know what I think it is? I think it's just the older we get and the longer we've been at this thing, the better we get and the more we realize what the kids' needs are and how to accommodate those needs. I really think that you cannot learn that at university or teachers' college. That comes with years of teaching kids and working with little guys. (p.25)

Three schools and ten years later, Rose is still teaching grade one in Edmonton.

Changing Outlook on Teaching

Looking back over twenty years of teaching, Rose points to three specific ways that her approach to teaching has changed. Here she describes how her methods of classroom management have changed:

> My methods of disciplining kids have totally changed.... I have tried to cut down to a fine line wait time in my classroom, so the kids are not

> sitting around.... Another thing is I felt I had to discipline the kids, and now my approach is loving the kids. I think that is a real big change in the way I approach things now. If you sincerely love those kids and build good rapport with them and provide a good program, your discipline is minimal. (pp.41-42)

Observations in Rose's classroom certainly support the picture of Rose as a loving teacher who tries to make every one of her students feel special. Rose maintains that today's curriculum demands more of children than it did twenty years ago. She supports this change because it agrees with her experience of working with six-year-olds:

> Another thing that has happened with this age group of kids, I have realized that six-year-old kids are capable of far more than we often give them credit for. As an individual, I want to push the kids as far as I can possibly push them. I was satisfied with much less when I first started teaching. (p.43)

The third way that Rose feels her teaching has evolved is in lesson preparation. Whereas most teachers spend longer hours preparing to teach when they are novices, Rose feels that she has reversed this trend in her career:

> Another way it has changed is the intensity of my planning and my preparation. The first few years that I was out, I did relatively no planning and preparation. A lot of what I did was off the top of my head. It's the reversal of what a lot of people do.... I put far more hours into planning, presentation, preparation, and researching than I ever did before. (p.42)

It is hard to believe that Rose was ever casual about her lesson preparation. Perhaps in relation to her current level of intensity this may have been true. Certainly in the researcher's sixteen years of experience he has never witnessed a higher state of classroom readiness nor closer attention to detail than that exhibited by Rose. One of the reasons she can devote so much time and energy to school work is that she and her husband made a conscious decision not to raise a family. Rose considers that her students are her family for the year they are in her care. Because she feels she could not do justice to both her students and children of her own, she made her commitment to helping other people's children. Also, Rob's present job demands much of his time, thus affording Rose the luxury of time to herself. This she invests in her school work.

Professional Needs

Rose's drive to continually improve her teaching skills is very strong. Hence, professional development is high on Rose's agenda, as it is for the staff of Forest Grove generally. University courses, however, have lost their appeal:

> I honestly don't think I'll ever go back and take another university class. The reason I say that is because when I think back to all the university classes I took, a lot of what I studied, and this is going to sound very negative, but a lot of what I studied was totally irrelevant to what happened in the classroom. (p.46)

Rose may be typical of experienced teachers to the extent that she seeks practical ideas which can be used in class the following day. Professional activities which fail to meet this criterion, no matter who sponsors them, Rose deems disappointing. Here is her comment on a conference sponsored by the Alberta Teachers' Association:

> I was very disappointed because there was not one thing that I got out of that conference that I could come back and use on Monday. If I want to take time to develop professionally, I want things that I can come back and use in the classroom - not the way somebody presented, but at least to come back and say, 'Look, I got some great ideas; I can make these ideas work for me'. (p.46)

Rose has found that the inservice programs offered by her own school board best meet her needs because of their variety and the fact that she can pick the ones which meet her professional needs:

> So professional development for me is to look very carefully through the calendar of things that are offered by the Edmonton Public School Board .... I've been teaching long enough to know what my professional needs are and therefore I choose those things that I feel I need to improve in. (p.46)

The things which Rose felt she 'needed to improve in' referred to areas of curriculum which are constantly changing. Staying abreast of such changes is important to Rose:

> If you don't keep up with what is going on, you may as well kiss your career good-bye. You can't teach a twenty-five-year-old curriculum in this day and age. You have got to teach what is current. (p.47)

Personal Needs

When asked about her personal needs, Rose seemed reluctant, almost fearful to separate them from her teaching. This seemed to be because, for the time being at least, personal needs have been set aside for professional ones:

> I honestly have to admit to you that there is no social activity or thing that I do personally as even a break from my job. My job is all encompassing. It really takes most of my time. I think that part of it is that I don't have a family. I don't have other diversions that force me away from it. (p.44)

Pushed to look beyond the present, Rose admitted an interest in pursuing medicine as a new career, although a year off for rest and relaxation would be very attractive. Rose is hesitant to explore hypothetical situations like that because, "I have a fear that if I ever did that, I might like it so much I may never go back to work" (p.45). In the meantime, Rose is content to teach grade one at Forest Grove Elementary School and to await what the future holds for her.

How Others See Rose

Rose's peers generally regard her as an outstanding teacher. However, until the initiation of the peer coaching project, teachers rarely observed one another actually teaching. Impressions of a peer's professional ability must be gleaned from such clues as the way one's class behaves in public, glimpses of class management snatched through open doors, displays of children's work, informal conversations, one's reputation, and through comments or presentations to the staff. An exception is the principal who must supervise everyone on staff.

The principal initially described Rose as "confident in her teaching" (J p.19) and suggested to her that she consider being part of the research project. The fact that Rose was offered an intern for one of the two years when the Alberta government financed the Initiation to Teaching Project, may also be interpreted as a vote of confidence in her ability. As the peer coaching project began, the principal acknowledged that, "Rose takes things pretty seriously. Sometimes she puts a lot of pressure on herself. I have to talk to her and get her to slow down" (FN p.44). The principal also referred to the intensity and thoroughness which Rose brings to any task she undertakes. The staff had an opportunity to see Rose exhibit these qualities in October when she was asked to explain her system for working with parent aides. In an impressive presentation, Rose explained how she selects and trains her aides and teaches them the function of her parent-aide box. This box contains every possible item the parents will need to perform their assigned tasks. It contains an assignment book which explains the plan for the day and lists possible jobs. Red writing indicates highest priority assignments. The aides even have their own date calendar so they can re-schedule their days and arrange for a replacement.

The principal admitted that Rose's penchant for detail and commitment to perfection made her somewhat unique on staff. Consequently some teachers are somewhat reluctant to work with her because she is so intent on her own goals. From a team perspective such individuality can occasionally create difficulties for the coach, as it did prior to the fall report when Rose wanted to send out a longer student report and have longer parent-teacher conferences than the rest of the staff. A staff meeting clarified the reasons for a common report by all the teachers.

An instructional processes consultant who had observed and coached Rose over an eight-month period when Rose was enrolled in the Teacher Effectiveness Program, said that it was presumptuous of him to coach her (J p.71). She had an excellent grasp of the material and her lessons were planned and executed to perfection.

Both teachers who had the opportunity to be Rose's peer coaching partners during the four months of the project, also attested to her skill as a teacher, to her strength as a person, and to her love for teaching. Both teachers became aware of the differences between their own and Rose's goals for peer coaching. The internal and external dimensions of these interpersonal differences will be explored later, in the section on the lines of action - peer coaching.

How Rose Sees Herself

In an earlier discussion of how her teaching has evolved, Rose revealed some of the qualtities she sees in herself as a teacher. She pictures herself as a teacher whose class management is built on a warm, caring relationship with her students, as a teacher who plans her lessons carefully and presents them with enthusiasm, and as a teacher who has high expectations of her students.

Rose's acquisition of an intern provides another clue to her self-image; it also reinforces previous images of her thoroughness. The previous year, the principal offered Rose an opportunity to have an intern, and she suggested that Rose should make the selection herself. Rose studied thirty files before settling on six to interview. Each interview lasted about two and a half hours. Rose's description of the young woman who was her choice is significant because it reveals those qualities she admires in others and quite likely perceives in herself: a country girl with whom she would get along well; honest and open to suggestions; she didn't 'know it all'; she was not 'all-fancied up' (FN p.23).

Since Rose's tastefully coordinated clothes and chic hair styles do not betray her rural up-bringing, it may be that Rose remembered what she was like when her teaching career began and saw in this intern those same qualities. Another explanation is that, despite her aura of confidence, Rose may still not be as confident in her own abilities as others perceive her to be. The data seems to point to there being two sides to her self-image: one which acknowledges that she is an outstanding teacher and another which causes her to wonder if her intensity isn't a handicap to developing interpersonal relationships.

An example of the confident Rose can be seen in an October conference with Margie. Rose spoke of her love for teaching and reflected complete confidence in her ability to plan a lesson:

> I just really love what I do and, there probably isn't a lesson that I ever do that I don't feel good about, because when you think them through and you know... what you want to accomplish, it usually works out. I made sure that the components of a good lesson were in there. (pp.232-233)

Asked why she put so much emphasis on the technical elements of her teaching, Rose revealed both sides of her self-image when she replied:

> Because I'm a perfectionist. It is because of my background. I think it's my Dad's influence more than anything. It stems right back to my childhood.... I think when I first started teaching I did not strive for excellence. Now I want to be the very best that I can be, in every way that I can be. You can be your own worst enemy by doing that, and I realize that. (p.50)

Rose was to repeat the phrase, about being her own worst enemy several times in various contexts during our conversations. The common thread which linked them and which Rose seemed to recognize as a fault of commission, was her intense commitment to her teaching responsibilities. This extraordinary sense of responsibility is evident in these comments in relation to a teacher who left her class to work on a Christmas project in the gymnasium:

> My whole reason for being here is this - what's right here [in the classroom], and I'm upset if I have to leave this place even for five minutes. I know that I can be replaced but yet - I don't know, I guess I just feel such an intense responsibility. I'm my own worst enemy. (p.95)

Summary

In this section we have looked at the various elements which have combined to create the teacher, Rose. The dominant early influences appear to be her upbringing in a German family which emphasized excellence and strong religious convictions. During the period leading up to her settling in Edmonton, Rose had a wealth of teaching experiences in many different schools and communities. She found these tremendously stimulating and made a personal commitment to teach grade one to the best of her ability. At Forest Grove School Rose's hard work and attention to detail in her teaching have earned her praise and recognition from her peers but caused her to wonder if her desire for excellence in teaching may act as an impediment to developing interpersonal relationships.

Many adjectives have been used in an effort to describe the teacher referred to as Rose: caring, task-oriented, intense, motivated, committed, perfectionist, structured, thorough, organized, enthusiastic. Each of them adds another dimension to our picture of this complex person. Of these, three descriptors seem to best capture the essence of Rose: committed, enthusiastic, and structured.

Later sections of this chapter will explore Rose's internal and external relationships with others with whom she interacted in the peer coaching project.

Mary Michaels

Mary Michaels is a quiet, unassuming woman in her early forties who teaches a combined grade three-four class at Forest Grove Elementary School. Like many on staff, she was transferred to this school when it opened. As one of three key informants in this research project, it is essential to understand her biography in order to obtain meaning from her responses. Here is Mary's story.

Early Influences

Mary was the eldest of fourteen children born to Irish-Catholic parents on a farm in southwestern Ontario. Her family was relatively poor; there was always work to do, whether caring for the younger children or helping with the farm chores. At an early age, Mary learned her father's work ethic; even today she is still conscious of its lasting effect on her:

> When you did a job on the farm, whether it was milking the cows or piling the wood or whatever, you were expected to do a good job. If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well. So I know it's something I was engrained with, and we were always working too. (p.318)

Although Mary long ago rejected her father's excessive work schedule, she still catches herself looking for jobs to give to her own children when she finds them relaxing.

Mary received her elementary education in a one-room school which only had twelve students. She remembers what a shock it was to transfer to a high school of seven hundred in a nearby town.

Although growing up in such a large family had more than its share of work and difficulties, when Mary left her family at age seventeen, she began to realize just how important family ties were to her:

> As a unit we were always closely knit, and I think even now there still is that feeling; even though I am away and my sister is out here. You can just see when you go there that there still is that feeling. Even when the nieces and nephews come, you're just sort of taken in. (p.316)

Becoming a Teacher

When Mary graduated from high school at the end of grade thirteen, she decided to become a teacher. She suggested that there were two reasons which motivated her to choose teaching as a career. She resented being poor and wanted to be able to get a job quickly without spending several years at university. The other reason was also related to her family experiences:

> I knew I liked children because, as the eldest, I helped raise a lot of children, but it also made me not want to have children right away. (p.313)

At age seventeen, Mary left home to attend Teacher's College at Stratford, Ontario. She recalls that as a teenager and as a young adult, she was a very shy person. Since the teacher-training program was compressed into one year, there was little time for practicing before being observed by the instructors. Mary vividly remembers the anxiety which she experienced whenever her supervisors observed her during practice teaching:

> I know that just from nerves and whatever, of them watching, that lots of times I just flubbed up because of my nerves. You know, I did better when they weren't there and I didn't feel under the stress. (p.321)

Teaching positions were abundant when Mary graduated, and she went to work immediately teaching forty-two first and second graders in the Kitchener Separate School System. The Kitchener system made its consulting services available to beginning teachers; Mary credits this support and help given to her by her peers for her lack of teaching difficulties in later teaching assignments.

Teaching enabled Mary to achieve two of her immediate goals - freedom and money. Kitchener was close enough to home that she could visit whenever she wanted. At first she went home every week-end; later she visited monthly.

When she was twenty-one, Mary and a friend toured Europe during the summer vacation. After four years in Kitchener, Mary and her friend sought further adventure by accepting teaching positions on a Canadian air force base north of Montreal.

Marriage, Family, and Teaching

While on the military base, Mary met and married her husband. Before her second year of teaching at the base had ended, her husband was transferred to a Canadian Forces Base in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Mary finished out the school year, then followed him to Nova Scotia. Since she was expecting her first child and wanted to be a homemaker, Mary did not seek employment. During the eight years the Michaels lived near Halifax, Mary attempted to fulfil her aspirations as wife, mother, and teacher. Both Mary's daughters were born during this period. She taught for two years; otherwise, she taught only for shorter periods when teachers were out on maternity leave.

Even before coming to Nova Scotia, Mary had begun taking university courses to raise her teacher's certificate. In Nova Scotia, she registered at Mount Saint Vincent University and continued to work toward a Bachelor of Education degree which she later received from Sir Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

In 1974, Mary's husband left the armed forces and joined a nationally-based company. Four years later, when an opening became available in Edmonton, they decided to explore a new part of Canada.

It took approximately two years of wrestling with bureaucracy before Mary was eligible to teach in Alberta. In the interim, she took part-time employment, volunteered in her girls' school, and helped with Brownies. Soon after her Alberta Professional Certificate was issued, she was hired to teach grade two. Mary has taught continuously since, but has been transferred twice because of population shifts. Her last move was to Forest Grove School.

Balancing Priorities - Knowing Herself

Mary takes her teaching seriously, but she also wants to be a good mother and wife. Mary believes in doing things well and finds it frustrating when she feels over extended:

> The type of person I am with my teaching - I take it seriously; I devote a lot of time to it.... Even as a mother, I have high expectations of myself.... That's why I was feeling some stress because I thought I had to - because I wanted to be a good homemaker, a good mother, a good teacher. (p.317)

The need for a resolution of her dilemma led Mary to request a job-sharing position with one of the men on staff. Last year she and Roger shared a grade four class. This was her first experience teaching division two children; she really enjoyed it. The half-time commitment also allowed Mary an opportunity to balance her personal and professional development.

Mary's personal development took several forms. She enrolled in music lessons for the first time, despite always wanting an opportunity. She and her husband also participated in a series of seminars on personal development which his company sponsored. Known as 'The Forum', these workshops emphasized honest, interpersonal communications, and encouraged participants to be more self-assertive. Asked how this course affected her, Mary gave a number of examples which also reveal how she sees herself:

> Oh, I've risked being more open with my husband, my girls. I think I take more risks with the students at school as far as - before I always thought that I had to be, you know, not show emotion. I had to supposedly be perfect, if you know what I mean. I think now I take risks...I do get angry or I do get frustrated, or I do make mistakes, whatever. Whereas, before sometimes, you know, I would be afraid to let people know that maybe I was scared or worried. I kept a lot of things inside me rather than letting people know what was bothering me. [Now I'm] more willing to express my opinion whether people agree with me or not. (p.311)

Mary's half-time position allowed her the luxury of time to develop as a person. It also meant that she could explore some of the professional opportunities which the Edmonton Public School Board made available for its teachers. Mary received permission to participate in the district's Teacher Effectiveness Program. By attending the sessions during her free time, she was able to save the school money, yet not worry about time away from her class. Mary enjoyed the sessions because the consultant encouraged participants to share their ideas; she also felt that it made a difference in her teaching:

> Sometimes I would become very frustrated because children would be misbehaving and I would think it was because of me - that I wasn't doing something right. One of the things I realized last year - at least it came out to me; I should have known it before - was that there is a certain percentage of children who are going to misbehave or who really don't care. I always did try to motivate them, but then I was looking at myself. I guess it was good to realize that this will happen and I shouldn't blame myself or take it personally. (pp.345-346)

During her year of part-time teaching, Mary learned that she could meet both her personal and professional needs as well as feel satisfied with her teaching. Stress was not a problem. Now that she is back teaching full-time, she is again conscious that too many obligations may lead to increased anxiety. Her husband is also aware that it is important to monitor Mary's level of involvement. Last fall when she considered taking a university course, he reminded her of previous experiences and said, "Mary, you'll just put too much stress on yourself" (p.328).

As we look next at Mary the teacher, it is important to remember Mary's awareness of her ongoing struggle to achieve both personal and professional development while maintaining a balance between home and school responsibilities:

> I spend a lot of time with my teaching and I have over the years, so I'm trying to do some other things. So that's a struggle for me - to make sure that I have time to do other things too, so I sort of have a balance. (p.328)

Beliefs about Teaching

It should not come as a surprise that a teacher who is interested in balancing her own growth is very aware of the type of development she seeks for her students. Mary believes in a balance between academic skills and what she calls "getting-along skills" (p.322). Mary acknowledges that, like many teachers, she has wrestled with the dilemma inherent in public education of whether to give higher priority to the needs of the individual or the demands of the curriculum. Mary has strong beliefs about this question:

> To me the individual needs of the students come first. There are a lot of students who have psychological and emotional needs that to me, if you can't help in that area, then academically they aren't going to achieve very well anyway. (p.324)

Mary described various ways that she adapted her teaching to provide children with success so that they will feel good about themselves. In their only conference, Rose commented on how Mary had assured the children that making incorrect guesses was not only accepted but encouraged in her classroom. Mary replied, "That's a message I try to get across. That's one of my goals" (FN p.35).

Another of Mary's goals for her students is to help them understand and learn tolerance for children who are different than themselves. She thinks this is very important in a city like Edmonton where so many cultures mingle and where children with distinctly different learning abilities share the same classroom.

There are two themes which can be identified in Mary's educational philosophy which also consistently appear in her beliefs about her students and peers. The first is the importance of interpersonal relationships; the second is the importance of providing freedom for individuals to grow in their own unique way. As one might expect, Mary was observed to treat both adults and children in a similar, courteous manner.

Mary indicated that she felt her development as a teacher was partly due to the freedom and the support which she has enjoyed during her thirteen years of teaching:

> I've been lucky; I've had the freedom to do sort of what I thought was right within my class. So all throughout my teaching career I've always had the support of my principal. (p.326)

It is quite likely that one reason Mary has enjoyed such freedom and support from her principals and peers is that her easy-going personality and tolerance makes her well-liked and trusted by her colleagues:

> I know that within a school, other people don't have quite the same philosophy as me or they have a different way of doing it. I accept that too, and, you know, I'm me, and what works for me and my

> teaching style and my personality. I know that someone else may have a different personality and a different teaching style, and I feel confident that they're, you know, doing just as well in their way. I think that it is good for children to be exposed to different teaching styles because, maybe I'm missing something and they'll pick it up. (p.327)

Mary's attitude toward others forms a comfortable base from which to build friendships. Mary feels that developing interpersonal relationships is an important part of being on a staff. Yet, for someone who wants to do a good job in the classroom, it is tempting to overlook one's commitment to peers and focus one's energies exclusively on lesson preparation. A comment by Mary after being conferenced by Rose, illustrates that this is a dilemma about which she has strong feelings:

> I got a lot out of her [conference], but Rose spent all last Thursday noon working on her conference. That's not for me. Thursday noon I choose to go out and have lunch with some of the staff. To me, that's important that I do some socializing.... That's one of the commitments that I made to myself. I'll spend some time enjoying some of the people that I work with. (p.334)

How Others See Mary

It was not the researcher's purpose intentionally to solicit teachers' opinions of others on staff. Sometimes, however, spontaneous comments were made, which add to our overall picture of an informant. Their value can be in introducing certain characteristics not portrayed elsewhere, or in emphasizing the public image which an informant already presents. Sometimes this image can even be in contrast to the vision which the informant has of herself.

Mary's principal at Forest Grove described her as "very serious" and as "burning herself out to please others" (FN p.74). Mary's teacher effectiveness consultant commented that she was "a very shy lady, but a good teacher who visibly relaxed at the end of his conferences" (J p.70). Rose once observed that prior to peer coaching, she did not know Mary very well "because she spent a lot of time in her room because of her heavy load" (p.403). These brief images reinforce the portrait which has been previously developed of a shy, conscientious person who likes relating to other people but finds it hard to find time to socialize.

Yet the researcher's fieldnotes and journal reveal that Mary's staff involvement was quite extensive. The fact that Mary was allocated two student teachers is further evidence of her recognized abilities as a teacher. This year, Mary was asked to teach the first division academic challenge program for gifted children. This implies confidence in her ability to innovate with curriculum and to stimulate children academically. Mary is also the chairperson of the school science curriculum committee. This committee was particularly active in the fall, and on one of the first early-dismissal days, arranged for a science consultant to speak to the staff.

Afterward, the staff developed a comprehensive curricular plan intended to coordinate the science curriculum across the grades. That Mary was chosen to chair this committee indicates the confidence others have in her ability to lead and in her ability to achieve the goals set out in one of only two curricular areas mentioned in the school priorities. At the meeting to evaluate peer coaching, Mary was chosen to chair and report for one of the four groups. In staff meetings, Mary regularly expressed her thoughts on school issues, yet her manner of speaking conveyed the message that this was only her opinion.

In February, Edmonton teachers organized a district-wide recreational volleyball tournament. Mary was one of six teachers from the school who participated. She was quite likely the oldest staff member on the team, but played well, had fun, and showed another side of her personality - an interest in sports and sportsmanship.

Summary

Mary Michaels teaches a split grade three-four class at Forest Grove Elementary School. Her peers consider her to be a conscientious, rather shy person who takes her teaching seriously. Mary is well-liked by her colleagues, takes various leadership roles on the staff, and promotes interpersonal relationships. Mary consciously tries to achieve a balance between her personal and her professional development needs. This means trying to satisfy demands on her as a wife, a mother, and a teacher, in addition to nurturing her development as a person who is in control of her own destiny. Part of her development focuses on a legacy from her youth - her shyness and susceptibility to stress.

The fact that Mary can write and talk about her anxiety indicates that she has made significant progress in coping with it. Mary seems to know herself very well. Her self-reflection generally agrees with how others see her, but goes much deeper. Mary also has discovered that, like Hamlet, knowing what the problem is and being able to do anything about it are part of the human dilemma which afflicts us all. She reflected this sentiment when asked how she might apply her newly learned personal development skills:

> Being yourself when you communicate; not doing something for the sake of doing it.... Not to be afraid to be yourself. That is something I am dealing with. You know, but sometimes what you know and what you might tend to do - there can be that dilemma or whatever. (p.345)

Mary is a unique, complex person. Yet, because of her dual responsibilities in the home and in the school, in many respects she is typical of the majority of teachers in elementary schools in Canada. Many descriptors apply to her: shy, assertive, sociable, self-conscious, calm, anxious, conscientious, cooperative, accommodating, evolving as a person, respectful, tolerant, a team player, reserved, a good sport. Some of these descriptors appear contradictory, yet each one forms a part of the complex person who is Mary.

Margie Young

Margie Young is an enthusiastic, outgoing teacher in her late forties who teaches grade five every morning and kindergarten every afternoon at Forest Grove Elementary School. As one of the key informants in this case study, it is essential to set her reactions in the context of who she is. Margie's biography and career development represent sensitizing concepts which provide the framework for explaining her definitions and interpretations of the situation.

Growing Up in Regina

Margie was born north of Saskatoon, in the province of Saskatchewan, but she grew up in the city of Regina with her sister and brother. Although her parents were supportive and pleased with her accomplishments, she sensed that she did not receive the encouragement afforded her brother:

> My father had a philosophy that, if anything, it's men who need education; women don't. Men were to be the bread winners. Women were at home with the children. They were pleased with what I was doing at school, but I never got the feeling that they were giving me a push - never a pull back either;

> never any encouragement to any great extent; whereas, I know my brother was greatly encouraged. (p.256)

Margie believes that her public school teachers had the most impact on her during those growing-up years. She remembers, ironically, how a grade three teacher told her she didn't have any artistic talent because "she couldn't make a reindeer the way it was supposed to be" (p.256). Fortunately, other teachers were more positive about her abilities:

> Mrs. Barry in grade five - I think she'd encourage anybody to do art work. I liked her; I liked everything about her. I became interested, but I didn't start to think I had any potential until high school. Art was one of my options. I think all of us grew under Mrs. Laurence. By the time I got to grade twelve, I felt I could have been an artist. (p.256)

Margie's interest in art preoccupied her throughout the high school period and her initial teaching career. Her love for art continues to this day. It is evident in her classes, in the excitement of her voice when she talks about art, and in her art classes for adults which she offers at her church.

Choosing a Career

For someone so captivated by art, a choice of career might have seemed obvious. When asked if she considered becoming a full-time artist, Margie replied:

> Well, yes, I did consider that, but it wasn't something that you could be serious about because we were restricted financially. It was felt that an

> artist was not a profitable occupation. It was only a good hobby; you just couldn't do what you wanted. (p.257)

Nursing was another career to which Margie was attracted because one could enter nursing at the end of grade eleven and get paid during the training period. However, her father's extended hospitalization revealed a less attractive aspect of nursing; consequently, Margie turned to teaching. Interestingly enough, she cannot identify a particular reason for choosing a career in education. Perhaps it represented a practical compromise with her art aspirations, since her major was in fine arts and art education.

At the time she graduated from high school, there was not a teachers' college in Regina. However, it was known publicly that one would be established the following year. In the interim, Margie registered at Regina College. When it opened, she entered the Regina Teachers' College with five university credits and what she described as "too much confidence" (p.211). Her confidence, which remains a characteristic today, led to college leadership roles and many exciting memories.

The year after her graduation from Teacher's College with a Standard Teaching Certificate, Margie taught a grade four class in Regina. On Saturdays she taught art classes for children at the art gallery. Students from the Teachers' College also attended her art classes. At the end of her first year, Margie was encouraged to apply for a position teaching art at the College. Her successful application was a prelude to a period of intense personal growth.

> So the year after my first teaching year, I ended up teaching teachers at Teachers' College. It was a tremendous growth experience for me. If I felt that I've ever grown to my full extent, to the utmost that I possibly could in one year, I did then, I assure you. All of a sudden I had to take a different frame of mind.... that was a time I ended up doing a lot of things I never thought I could do if someone would have asked me a year earlier. (pp.212-213)

The experience of successfully coping with the extra responsibilities at Teachers' College further boosted Margie's self-confidence. It also provided her with experiences in art, drama, and stage properties which make her feel that "no matter what a school would go into, I feel like I could contribute somewhere with something" (p.213).

If marriage hadn't intervened, Margie's career in education might have evolved differently. Her husband encouraged her to complete her university degree. One year later, after teaching grade five in East End, Saskatchewan, Margie agreed, and she registered at the University of Saskatchewan where she completed her bachelor's degree in education. At that time, few boards were prepared to pay the salary of a degree-teacher at the elementary level; yet that was where Margie wanted to teach. She persevered and found what she considered an ideal position - teaching art to grades one to eight in Rosetown, Saskatchewan. Several years later, when her husband's job took him to Edmonton in 1967, Margie's first teaching career came to an end.

Metamorphosis

When the Youngs moved to Edmonton, Margie was expecting the first of her three daughters. For the next twelve years, while her children were still young, Margie did not teach school. However, she was still very involved in education. The question of whether kindergarten should be part of the public school system was an important public issue at that time. Margie had a vested interest:

> You don't really become involved until you have children that age. [My daughter] was about three going on four when I realized there were no public kindergartens. What are we going to do?... That's why I'm in early childhood; originally I was not a teacher who graduated with an early childhood diploma. (p.217)

Margie still remembers the eighteen-page application forms which the government required that kindergartens submit. Legislation required that parents become involved; yet for those who operated these private kindergartens, hiring teachers, paying salaries, buying equipment, and developing programs was a lot of hard work. Also, for those kindergarten teachers with teacher's certificates but whose salaries were half that of their public school counterparts, here was a cause worth fighting for. Margie became the president of the Parent Kindergarten Association and a determined lobbyist for public kindergartens. Her memories of the political manoevering, the campaigning, and the support of the media are still vivid in her mind. So are her recollections of the turmoil expressed by some teachers who lacked kindergarten backgrounds and experience working with parents. Because she wanted to understand better the problems of parent involvement in the Early Childhood Services [ECS] programs, Margie made a decision which initiated her second career in education:

> I thought, well, as a parent I was involved with the establishment of kindergarten programs and I couldn't understand what the problem with parental involvement was. Why would we be causing this great a problem? I thought well, unless you get the shoe on your foot, and walk in the steps of kindergarten teachers, you're not going to understand the problem. By that time, to be quite honest, my husband said to me, 'You've become so involved on a volunteer basis that maybe it would be better if you went back to work. I'd see more of you if you were working than volunteering.' (p.218)

In order to qualify for an Alberta teacher's certificate, Margie was required to take three additional courses. She took them plus others which gave her a graduate diploma in early childhood and art education. For the ten years since, Margie once again has been involved in kindergarten, this time from the professional teacher's perspective.

An Early Childhood Education Advocate

Margie has lived the kindergarten issue from all perspectives, as a parent, a volunteer, and as a teacher. During one of the years which followed her early childhood diploma, Margie acted as an Early Childhood Services Consultant with the Edmonton Public School Board. This exposure helped make her the committed, articulate advocate of early childhood education [ECE] which she has become. Being a consultant allowed her to visit many kindergartens, to work closely with both beginning and experienced teachers, and to learn of the problems which they experience. Two topics about which Margie has definite ideas are articulation and the training of ECE teachers at the university. Articulation, in the Alberta context, refers to the upward extension of a kindergarten centres-approach-to-education into the primary grades in order to accommodate the individual developmental patterns of children. This rather lengthy quotation hints at Margie's philosophy of early childhood education and at her reasons for wanting its articulation into grade one:

> We see how children learn. I'm really fascinated by watching them learn how to read. And it's not because I can say that I have done this, that, and the other thing and now they're reading. Now I know that I have to give them exposure to print and give them many different language experiences, but it's ironic - when they are ready and you have the centres ready in such a way that they can pick up on it, they read. So you see this at the kindergarten level and you wonder if a more natural way of learning could just be extended into grade one; they

> could just advance at their own rate or more naturally. I feel that a lot of our poor readers are the result of being taught too soon. (p.205)

Margie shudders when she remembers kindergartens where because of lack of training or a misunderstanding of the philosophy of early childhood, teachers "sit the children down and will start to teach them the A,B,C's and 1,2,3's and how to make them and everything. I understand that by Christmas a child just hates school" (p.205). Margie's experiences as a consultant also showed her that "there are many grade one teachers who would like to tell the kindergarten teachers how to get those kids ready" (p.207). Communication about articulation with other teachers remains a problem for her:

> I know that each one of our teachers is very different, each one of our grade one teachers, and they approach it in a different way. (p.207)

> I know that as far as even the kindergarten-grade one teachers...we do talk, and we do visit, but we don't have an urgent need to get together and find out exactly how these programs mesh. (p.206)

Margie suggests that many kindergarten teachers feel isolated - islands of ECE philosophy within their own schools. Sometimes it is even difficult to identify and publicize examples of good programs so that kindergarten teachers can regularly support one another through exchange visits. The problem is further compounded by the practicum placements arranged by the university for its undergraduate students majoring in early childhood education:

> I don't feel they come out of the university knowing what to do....Sometimes they've never had experience in a kindergarten program. They've completed their practicums in grade one, two, and three somewhere, and may have experienced teachers who teach in a very structured manner. So the experience they are coming in with in early childhood diploma is their experiences in grades one, two, and three and now they're having to apply that to the kindergarten program which, of course, has no basic relationship to the EC Philosophy. (p.208)

Margie feels these young graduates probably have learned the theory behind an early childhood philosophy but often lack confidence to apply it in indifferent or even hostile environments. She remembers when Forest Grove School opened and she was the first to present these ideas to the parents:

> I had been a consultant in early childhood a few years back, so when I came in here I guess I was very comfortable, very strong presenting my ideas to the parents. I mean there were some moms who were absolutely floored that I wasn't going to sit them down and teach their children their A,B,C's and 1,2,3's. (p.209)

Dual Roles at Forest Grove

Two years ago, after nine consecutive years teaching kindergarten or acting as a consultant, Margie was asked to teach grade five. She had taught that level three years after graduation from Teachers' College, but, "needless to say, any experiences I had then didn't apply to what I was doing last year" (p.219). She found teaching grade five quite a change, but one that she thoroughly enjoyed. This year, because specialists teach French for one hour per day to grades four, five, and six, teachers whose classes are at French must teach in another room. Consequently, every afternoon, three different teachers rotate through Margie's classroom while she teaches the afternoon kindergarten class. To make matters worse, her grade five class is located in a portable classroom while the kindergarten room is in the main building. Here is one of Margie's comments which conveys her feelings about this arrangement:

> The actual teaching itself is not bad. I would take what I'm teaching in grade five and I would take what I'm teaching in kindergarten and certainly do them again. But what I'm finding I don't have is enough time because of the two programs. You need double planning time, two classrooms to maintain.... So consequently I'm finding that the pressure of having to try and put the thing together without that extra [preparation] time or any time except your own time is really difficult. As I say, the [parent-teacher] interviews are horrendous. Whether or not I would take this assignment again I'd have to build in some prep time in stone before I'd do it. (p.52)

Margie neither dwelt on her dual-teaching assignment nor raised it often. However, the researcher always felt that she was on a tight schedule, that her time was precious, and interviews had to be carefully scheduled and kept relatively brief.

When she first heard about the research project, Margie said that she was immediately interested, but then had second thoughts:

> Then I got to thinking about what I was doing this year; I thought - hold it; I'm not so sure I need any more things, thank you very much. (p.223)

It seems ironic that when Mary asked to change peers and withdraw from the project, Margie was the one asked and she was willing to replace her.

With the dual pressures of two classes of children to plan for, it takes a strong person with a special philosophy of life to accept the added pressure of being part of a research project which required individual interviews. This quotation from a late October interview provides considerable insight into Margie's approach to life and how she applied it to her situation at Forest Grove:

> I know I'm sort of running behind myself and I admit that you know, I feel like I could spend more time over there [grade five]; I certainly could spend more time over here [kindergarten]. Then again, there are only so many hours in the day, and I feel pretty well confident enough that I can say that if it's not done today, it'll get done another day. (p.223)

How Others See Margie

Very few of Margie's colleagues commented about her to the researcher. However, through observation and by implication, one can infer that Margie is well-liked and respected by her peers. She is an integral part of the group which went out for lunch at noon every Thursday. The Thursday lunch group is an informal, ongoing arrangement which was familiar to the entire staff. Its purpose is purely social and anyone is welcome to go along. There seems to have been a faithful core including Mary and

Margie, a few who went occasionally, and others, including Rose, who seldom attended.

Margie also appears to play a significant role within the school staff. She is the school coordinator for art, and she has served on both the professional development and social committees. Like Mary, Margie's leadership qualities were recognized when she was asked to chair one of the four groups which evaluated the first phase of the peer coaching project. Margie's predictable delegating of the report to another member of the group brought a chuckle from the staff. The fact that the principal approached her to replace Mary in the peer coaching arrangement with Rose indicates the respect which the principal has for Margie's ability to cope with a situation which could only add extra pressure to an already hectic schedule. This feeling of respect is echoed by Rose in a December interview in which she reflected on Margie's decision not to teach a traditional lesson for her to observe:

> Even though I didn't see all these lessons, all the components, we all know what Margie is like and what she is about. She is a super teacher. (p.104)

A month earlier, Rose compared the emotional climate she sensed when working with Margie to the feeling she had when she worked with Mary:

> Margie is the opposite. She is very relaxed and laid-back. (p.421)

Margie's Self-image

Throughout this biography, Margie has been consistently portrayed as a person who acts on her beliefs, who will eventually find time to meet her many commitments, and who exhibits a great deal of self-confidence. Margie's self-perception reinforces this portrait. In a late January interview, Margie spoke about the new peer arrangements for the second phase. Reflecting on the fact that Mary would be continuing with her original peer partner while she was to be paired with a new partner, Margie exhibited the strength of character and confidence in her abilities which are so characteristic of her:

> Mary was so comfortable with her [partner] and Mary has made a change already, and, if anything, I feel I am the stronger of the two right now, and I can make the change a lot easier than she can. I've never been uptight about anyone coming into my program. I've had teachers come in; I've had principals and parents come in constantly. I believe in what I'm doing in the kindergarten as well as the grade five class. If it flows - okay, fine; if it doesn't, I just have to check what's wrong and try to bring it back again. (p.260)

There is a private side to Margie which rarely emerged in our interviews but which one could sense occasionally in casual conversations. It is that part of Margie which belongs to her husband and children. On the few occasions when she spoke of her children or her husband, one caught glimpses of a deep sensitivity and caring which indicated how important they were to her. Margie seems to be one of those fortunate teachers who can successfully divorce her life at school from her life at home. Margie's husband's roots go back to his farm in Saskatchewan. Every year when he returns from the harvest she senses his renewed vigor and satisfaction. This past year, because the harvest was early, the whole family could go, and did. Margie's terse comments painted a loving but humorous verbal sketch of her driving a truck helping her husband harvest the grain. Another time, when she was thanked for consenting to an after-school interview, Margie explained it was possible because she had made special arrangements so that the evening meal would be ready for her family.

Besides seeing herself as a family person and as someone who has confidence in her own abilities, Margie also thinks of herself as being unstructured. She used this term in the group discussions at the peer coaching evaluation held at the end of phase one of the peer coaching project. The group was exploring the positive effects which peer coaching had on the participants. Margie mentioned that it had revitalized her teaching because the contrast between Rose's structured approach to teaching and her own had caused her to examine and re-confirm her own philosophy and beliefs. Her use of the term unstructured is relative to Rose's teaching and should be interpreted in that context. Out of context, this description could be misleading. Margie's philosophy and beliefs about early childhood education are structured to both a kindergarten class and a class of grade five students.

Margie's wide educational background, her good nature, and her leadership qualities have made her a key person both socially and academically on the Forest Grove staff. Margie has strong, well-articulated beliefs in early childhood education and a personal philosophy which enables her to cope confidently with the pressures of school and to separate them from her family life.

All of these adjectives describe Margie: busy, creative, laid-back, committed, open, self-confident, involved, adaptable, articulate. Of these, the one which best seems to personify Margie is self-confident.

Forest Grove Elementary School

Forest Grove Elementary School is a relatively new school built to handle residential growth in suburban Edmonton, a city of approximately a half-million residents, and the capital of the province of Alberta. Despite its recent construction date, a continuing influx of children from the growing community has meant that school officials have been forced to bring in portable classrooms to augment the ten which exist in the main building. The total school population has grown steadily year by year to its present hiatus of four hundred students. Forest Grove students come from mainly middle-income families and although the

the extent that they are articulate, and her fidelity to that structure can be seen in the behind-the-scenes planning which manifests itself in the kindergarten program which she has built around activity centres. 'Unstructured', to Margie, seems to imply an openness, a creativity, and a spontaneity which she alludes to in this reaction to the structured format which Rose used when peer coaching:

> I find it very confining, I really do. I guess I don't like anything canned. I really think that even teaching is very spontaneous. I have my plans, but plans certainly can go by the wayside when I see other opportunities that are better. I feel the same goes with this [peer coaching] situation. It can almost lead to many exciting discoveries, if you want it to. (p.227)

Summary

Margie Young's career as a teacher can be thought of as two careers separated by a twelve-year period when she stopped teaching to raise a family. In her first career, Margie was seen as a confident young art teacher who might have continued at the faculty of the Regina Teachers' College. Instead, her involvement as a parent activist in the volunteer kindergarten movement led to her metamorphosis as a kindergarten teacher, an early childhood education advocate, and a consultant for early childhood services. She introduced the kindergarten program to Forest Grove School, but this year she is responsible for majority are Caucasian, the students are fairly representative of the racial and ethnic groups living in this city which attracts immigrants from all over the world.

The school structure contains several open spaces into which long colourful banners hang from vaulted ceilings. Strategically-placed windows permit the sunlight to highlight the banners and the examples of students' work which are prominently displayed on the walls. The building still looks new - a tribute to respectful treatment by its users and the careful attention of the custodial staff.

Forest Grove School has all the amenities Albertans have come to expect in their elementary schools - a gymnasium, a music room, a library, and a large, community-oriented playground. However, a school is more than an architect's blueprint realized in bricks, mortar, glass, and wood. People constitute the heart of every school - students, their parents or guardians, the teachers and the support staff.

The Staff

In September, twenty teachers were employed at Forest Grove Elementary School. Since some of them taught part-time, the actual number in equivalent full-time teachers is closer to eighteen. This figure includes two French specialists, a music teacher, a librarian, the principal, and a vice-principal/counsellor. In addition, the school employs two full-time aides and a third was added in December.

When Forest Grove opened, surplus teachers were recruited from various city schools. In every case these were experienced teachers, many of whom had moved to Edmonton and hence had little seniority in the city system. The principal suggested this recruitment resembled the loading of Noah's ark because the teachers came in pairs from so many different schools. The resulting staff includes teachers who at various times in their careers have held a variety of important and responsible positions: three former consultants with the Edmonton School Board, two teachers who have taught education courses at a teachers' college or university, and a former vice-principal. Several on staff have their masters' degrees. During the fall term three Forest Grove teachers were asked to give a workshop for other public school teachers. The Forest Grove staff has a lot of inherent talent, yet a district questionnaire revealed their desire for more professional development opportunities. Only two of the teachers have less than five years' teaching experience; none of them is a novice; the majority have taught between ten and twenty years. The average age on staff is approximately thirty-seven. Consequently, they are an energetic, articulate group of teachers in the prime of their careers.

School Priorities

The school handbook identifies "excellence" (CD September 3, 1987) as being the common goal of parents and teachers. A document on philosophy and guidelines for student behaviour indicates the school's priorities with respect to the education of the young:

> Forest Grove operates on the philosophy that all students have the right to learn. To do so, each student must be in a school climate that is satisfying, productive, without disruptive behaviour by a student infringing on the rights of others. Home and school must share the responsibility for acceptable conduct. By working together we can ensure positive student behaviour. A school-wide discipline plan based on the above philosophy has been adopted by the staff of Forest Grove. We call it the Positve Behaviour Plan. (CD October 19, 1987)

Students are expected to discuss this document with their parents, then return a slip to school indicating this has been done. These guidelines elaborate on specific expectations for student behaviour and emphasize that a goal of the school is "to develop self-discipline and self-confidence in every child"; students are required to accept the consequences for their behaviour. Minor problems can be handled by the teacher on-the-spot, but continuing or major offenses are subject to the five-step Positive Behaviour Plan which emphasizes student involvement in solving the problem.

In keeping with priorities set by the school district, the Forest Grove staff sets annual school priorities. Documents collected in September revealed a total of five school priorities:

1. To enhance employee effectiveness and satisfaction.
2. To further promote parental involvement at Forest Grove School.
3. To improve student achievement in language arts.
4. To improve student achievement in science.
5. To improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of students and staff.

Each priority has been appropriately developed so that the school board can get an indication of how and when the staff hopes to meet its objective. The introduction of peer coaching to the staff was perceived as a means of achieving the first goal indicated above.

The Family Image

The principal often speaks of the staff and students of Forest Grove as a family. This seems to be an image she wants to promote with the students, the staff, and the community at large.

At the first staff meeting prior to school opening in September, the principal proudly reported to the staff the results of a district questionnaire which reflected the level of caring in the Forest Grove family. Not only did the questionnaire indicate a higher-than-average level of staff concern for students, but it also revealed that the children's feelings for the school were significantly above the mean. These good feelings also translated into data which indicated that 100% of parents polled felt welcome at F.G.E.S.. This remarkable response is not the product of luck; rather it results from a determined effort by the staff to encourage parents to be knowledgeable about and involved with their child's school. The school handbook, which each child receives in September, emphasizes open, two-way communication between the home and the school. Monthly newsletters, an active parent support group, and a comprehensive parent-aide program support this goal. A staff discussion prior to a reading workshop for parents tried to insure that parents would feel comfortable in the presence of professional teachers. Examples such as this support the contention that the teachers of Forest Grove possess a corporate maturity which enables them to be sensitive to the needs of others.

Certain organizational features of the school also support the family image. Family Time is an undertaking which brings students together at least once a month in fifty-four multi-aged groups of four to six students each. Under the leadership of a grade six student, each Family Time group participates in recreational or craft activities designed by staff to promote friendships across the grades.

When the school celebrates special occasions, Family Time groups often provide a convenient, yet natural, way to organize the party.

Besides promoting "sibling relationships" in the family, Forest Grove projects an image of a caring community - a family which displays affection and sensitivity to the needs of others. When the students come in from outdoors at recess or noontime, each teacher meets her class at the door. Among the younger students, hugs are frequent, as the children enter chatting naturally. The students are friendly, uninhibited, yet respectful of their teachers. In four months of visits to Forest Grove School, the researcher never once heard a teacher's voice raised in anger to a child.

The image of a caring family applies to the professional staff as well as to the children and parents. The school custodian, secretaries, and paid aides all participated in the initial staff meeting of the year. Everyone regularly uses the staff room, and the staff take turns baking birthday cakes for one another, although the number of candles on the cake may not reflect the true age of the recipient.

The Team Image

Thinking of the Forest Grove staff as a team is another useful and appropriate image. Like the metaphor of the school family, the image of the professional staff as a team was frequently mentioned and promoted by the principal.

When first approached by the researcher, the principal spoke proudly of her staff, describing them as a team consisting of individuals with diverse and unique strengths (J p.16). In early October, she thanked the staff for their "team effort" on the reading workshop for parents (FN p.53). Yet maintaining a sense of this team effort required continuous monitoring. Later in October, differing opinions on reporting procedures threatened to give parents different signals leading to comparisons between teachers. At a special staff meeting the principal called for "a common mission" through a consistent approach to reporting. "The little things will pull us apart", she noted and reminded her staff that, "the strength of Forest Grove lies in appreciating our differences while maintaining a common thread" (FN p.85). A staff memo a few days later reinforced the agreed-upon procedures and the principal's message:

> Celebrate the Differences! Forest Grove has always prided itself on its creative and imaginative thinking. It is my hope that we can look ahead, improve what we are doing, and share our ideas. Good schools are never satisfied with the status quo. New ideas and better ways are always coming to the forefront and we must be ready and willing to meet them. Is that not one of the marks of a true professional?

In order to test my perception of the staff as a team, in mid-November the principal was asked if the team metaphor applied to her vision of the staff. She replied, "Yes, very much so". Pushing the metaphor further, I asked whether she was the manager, coach, or a player on the team. With a grin she replied, "All of them, depending on what is needed" (J p.88).

The vice-principal suggested that because of the strong individuals on staff and because of the leadership style of the principal, a lot of idea-sharing occurs. Although others expressed the sentiment that there was not enough time for sharing, they may have been referring to opportunities for informal exchanges on a more personal level. In staff and committee meetings, many teachers took leadership roles and everyone had an opportunity to participate. Although there is a lot of expertise on the Forest Grove team, the teachers appear to be equally respectful of one another both as people and as teachers. In addition to mutual respect, there is a good feeling of togetherness which resembles team spirit. As one of the two male teachers noted in a staff meeting, "The rapport on this staff is unreal" (FN p.3).

Summary

Forest Grove Elementary School is a relatively new school built in the Edmonton suburbs. Its fourteen classes and twenty teachers have already expanded into portable classrooms. One of the school priorities is to initiate a peer coaching project to enhance further employee effectiveness and satisfaction. The teaching staff was described as a hard-working group of individuals who possess considerable expertise and teaching experience. Two metaphors have special meaning for the Forest Grove School. An image of the school as a family and of the staff as a team were promoted by the principal and frequently used by the staff.

The Teacher Effectiveness Program

The Teacher Effectiveness Program [TEP] of the Edmonton Public School Board represents another of the contextual elements of the peer coaching project at Forest Grove Elementary School. In this element we can identify several sensitizing concepts of symbolic interactionism: definition of the situation, typification, means/ends, and causality. Concepts, terminology, and practices commonly employed in the TEP were adopted with little or no adaptation into the peer coaching project. The lessons of the TEP became a means to the peer-coaching end sought by the Forest Grove Staff. TEP procedures typified peer observations and conferences. Clearly, the definition of the setting in which peer coaching occurred would be incomplete without a description of the Program and the reactions of teachers to it.

Forest Grove Involvement

Forest Grove School has been strongly committed to the T.E. Program for several years. In 1987-88, the principal elected to send four teachers, more than any other school in the system. These people were attending TEP sessions during the period when data on the peer coaching project was being collected. Ten other members of the Forest Grove staff including the principal and three key informants had previously completed the TE Program. The remaining seven teachers had not yet had an opportunity, although the principal implied they would have an opportunity as soon as it was feasible. Of these seven, three were specialist teachers who were omitted from phase one of the project; another was the assistant principal whose role in this phase was to cover the class of a teacher who was observing and coaching a peer. That means that only three out of fourteen teachers who were directly involved in peer coaching lacked a TEP background.

Description of the Program

Bentley (1987) describes the Teacher Effectiveness Program as:

> ...a long term professional development program designed to familiarize teachers and administrators with a process of enriching their teaching

> repertoire. The process focuses on the four component parts of providing theory, demonstration, practice, and coaching through conferencing. It is offered as a package to professional staff at the elementary, junior high, and senior high levels, and deals with teaching skills in the areas of classroom management, instructional skills and teaching strategies. (p.97)

Although she refers to the program as the Effective Teaching Program, the name Teacher Effectiveness Program is also frequently used by consultants (CD September 18, 1987) and teachers alike. Both names refer to the same program.

The present program developed from two pilot projects initiated in 1982. Two models, a pull-out and an in-school model of inservice sessions, became the basis for the current program. The pull-out program which still forms the main thrust of the TEP, requires teachers to be released from their classrooms and brought to a central location for half-day inservice sessions held approximately every two or three weeks. The total number of sessions varies from year to year, but has ranged from a low of nine this year, to a high of seventeen sessions several years ago. The in-school model is generally reserved for staffs in which a core of teachers has already completed the pull-out program and been trained in the conferencing skills. Although a consultant presents the content of the inservice program, the trained teachers on the staff are expected to observe and coach their peers. The peer coaching project at Forest Grove School resembles the in-school program in two respects: there is a core of teachers with TEP experience [although they have not been trained specifically to conference], and the program operates after school hours. However, there is not a TEP consultant involved directly in the peer coaching project; there is not an inservice component; and the goals are different.

The TE Program has expanded consistently year after year. Bentley (1987) indicated that in 1985-86, approximately 10.5 resource consultants and two hundred ten teachers were directly involved with the Program. She further noted that her review of the literature suggested that this program is as large as, if not larger than, similar programs in the rest of North America. By way of comparison, Edmonton Public Schools is the seventh largest school district in Canada and the thirty-ninth largest in North America (CD September 1987).

Underlying Philosophy. The TE Program which has been developed by instructional processes consultants in Edmonton, can trace its philosophical roots to the science of education movement which spawned the effective schools research of the 1970's. These researchers identified specific behaviours by teachers and students which statistically correlated with higher achievement test results. Out of the mass of research, certain educators, notably Brophy and Good (1986) and Hunter (1980, 1982), have provided guidelines for effective teaching. The influence of these kinds of approaches is very evident in the TEP. Some of the common characteristics of the teacher effectiveness models are as follows:

1. A direct teaching style emphasizes teacher control of the quantity, quality, and pace of instruction.

2. Learning tasks are broken down into smaller skills which are identified by objectives and taught sequentially with systematic review.

3. There is a strong emphasis on time on task. This means that during a high percentage of class time the teacher should be engaged in actual teaching and students should be actively involved with the course content.

4. Preventative discipline is emphasized. Clearly defined rules, procedures, and expectations remove any possibility of misunderstanding by students with regard to classroom management. Students are held accountable for the consequences of their behaviour.

5. Teachers employ behaviour modification techniques by emphasizing positive reinforcement, immediate feedback, and by regulating the difficulty of assignments to insure a high level of success by the students.

The TEP, like other effective teaching models, is characterized by a vocabulary or educational language which not only lends credence to its purportedly scientific basis, but also provides practitioners [teachers] with their own technical language with which they can discuss methods of resolving difficulties in a seemingly professional manner. Perhaps effective teaching models have filled the void identified by Lortie (1975) who observed that teachers lack a technical language.

A second major characteristic which the TEP shares with other models is its identification of specific principles which guide the actions of teachers in the classroom. Like the language, these principles are of a technical nature.

Bentley (1987, pp.34-40) identified many operational, instrumental, methodological, and statistical problems which are associated with the research on effective teaching. It is not the intention of this research to examine the criticism of effective teaching. Rather the purpose of this section is to describe the TE Program's philosophical base so that the reader can put the reactions of the key actors in relation to this background. Perhaps it is enough to suggest that the debate over whether teaching is an art or a science is an ongoing one. The proponents of the TEP and similar effective teaching models, although they pay homage to teaching being an art as well as a science, believe that little can be done to improve the artistic side of teaching; hence they put their faith and their efforts on the scientific side.

Components of the Program. The TE Program may be perceived to consist of two main components: an inservice component and a process skills component.

The inservice component of the TEP is developed from the model developed by Joyce and Showers (1980). This model outlines a four-step process which they suggest is necessary to utilize with teachers if one's goal is to transfer a newly-learned skill to the classroom:

1. Presentation of theory
2. Demonstration or modelling of the skill by the instructor
3. Practice under ideal conditions with feedback from an observer
4. Coaching to the point of mastery in classroom conditions.

Each of the instructional processes consultants is responsible for implementing these four steps of the Program to his/her group of approximately twenty-four teachers. The first three steps occur at the centrally-located classes held at regular intervals between the first of October and the end of May. Step four takes place at each teacher's school when the consultant observes him or her teach a lesson, then coaches the teacher in a conference which occurs soon afterward. It is expected that before the next session, the consultant will observe and conference each teacher on the skills taught, demonstrated, and practiced at the previous session. A slight variation on this format occurs in some schools which have a number of teachers who have completed the TE Program and express an interest in coaching. In this case, teachers observe and conference their peers and are, in turn, observed and coached by the consultant for a one-year period. Although it is the intent that this arrangement will eventually lead to schools being independent of external consultants, the cost to school budgets for supply teachers has discouraged many schools from moving in this direction and encouraged continuing and even increased dependence on the consultants.

The process skills component can be divided into three major strands: instructional skills and strategies, classroom management skills, and observation and conferencing skills. Together they form the content of the Program.

The instructional skills and strategies strands of the TEP rely heavily on Madeline Hunter's Instructional Theory Into Practice [ITIP] Program. Hunter (1982) defines the effective teacher as one who can follow the four major elements of her program:

1. Teach to an objective.

2. Select an objective at the appropriate level of difficulty.

3. Monitor students' performance and adjust teaching accordingly.

4. Make use of the principles of learning with regard to its rate and degree, motivation, retention, and transfer.

Many of the lessons and much of the vocabulary used in the TE Program relate directly to the principles of learning referred to above. For example, four phrases associated with the rate and degree of learning are: set [a process of mental focusing], closure [a process of summarizing], active involvement [consistent involvement in thinking], and sharing the objective and purpose [this gives the student a vision of the goal].

Similarly, under the principles of retention, teachers learn the use and implications of these words: modelling [a process of showing by demonstration, examples, or simulation], practice [this may be guided or independent], sequence [the positioning of lesson components], and meaning [the process of personalizing a concept].

The principles of motivation are intended to encourage students to be enthusiastic and persistent. Teachers learn that the variables which affect motivation are feeling tone [classroom atmosphere which may be positive, negative, or neutral], knowledge of results [immediate, specific, and relevant is best], accountability [the degree of concern felt by the student], and the student's interest.

Many of these variables which the effective schools' research has identified as statistically supporting a principle of learning, can be further broken into practical teaching principles intended to expand a teacher's repertoire of possible teaching behaviours. The design of a model lesson taught to teachers in the TEP is based on seven steps outlined by Hunter. Most of these steps also relate to the principles: set, objective and purpose, input, modelling, checking for understanding, guided practice, independent practice, and closure.

The classroom management skills strand of the TE Program is closely intertwined with the instructional skills and strategies. Its inclusion is a significant departure from some effective teaching programs which focus exclusively on instructional skills. The strand is based on three basic tenets:

1. Be preventative [proactive].
2. Respond to inappropriate behaviours.
3. Use the principles of discipline.

TEP consultants point out that students will and do misbehave. Classroom management skills represent the means for controlling groups of students in order that a teacher may utilize her instructional skills and strategies. In a diagram generally shown to the teachers, these skills represent the bottom third of a three-stage pyramid also consisting of instructional skills, and curricular material.

Most of the theory, demonstration and practice on classroom management skills focuses on being preventative and dealing with inappropriate behaviours. The research base suggests that the fewest discipline problems will occur in schools which are structured according to publicly advertised standards, in which the students are actively involved, and the teachers are polite, business-like, interested in their students and organized in their teaching, and they have high expectations. In this context, the connection between being proactive and having instructional skills is obvious.

However, the effective schools research base also suggests best ways to handle discipline problems when they occur. The first step is to observe the misbehaviour and interpret it before responding. Here the Program relies heavily on the material of Rudolf Dreikurs (1972) who identified what he referred to as the four mistaken goals of students and suggested ways of dealing with each of them. Without going into great detail, the consultants train the teachers to identify the goal and then respond with a series of escalating levels or "bumps" which allow the student to choose his behaviour but makes him aware of the consequences. Bump 1 involves nine "low key responses" such as eye contact with the offender, moving closer (proximity), private dialogue, facial expressions, etc.. Bump 3, called "choices", involves stopping teaching, confronting the offender, and giving him an either-or choice, then waiting for a response. Bump 7, the final option, is to ask the student to leave.

Observation and conferencing skills, the third strand of the TE Program, sometimes receive less theoretical emphasis by the consultants. However, consultants regularly model this skill with the teachers in their schools. The observation and conferencing format is similar to that described by Hunter (1980). Hunter describes how to take notes [script] during an observation period, how to analyze the notes in terms of the skills being observed and how to conduct a conference. She goes on to describe five basic types of conferences which she labels A, B, C, D, and E. Participants in the TE Program receive limited information only on the first four types of conference, but it is unusual for them to witness or become involved in a 'C' or 'D' conference. Initially, the consultant uses an 'A' conference with his teachers; later in the year a 'B' conference will normally be introduced. The intent of an 'A' conference is to encourage the teacher being observed to continue using those skills which they have been taught. The conference format is spelled out in considerable detail by Hunter. The TEP version follows:

INTRODUCTION: Setting the Atmosphere

Greeting

Feeling Tone Statement(s)

Overview of - Sequence of Events
- General Objective and Purpose for the Conference

Transitional Statement

PHASE 1: Complete the Diagnosis

Teacher's Point of View (Listen to and mentally label the teacher's comments)
(Narrow the Focus)

Transitional Statement

PHASE 2: Encouragement

Definitions of the Skill, What

Label

Identification of Examples and Label Attributes

Recommendation

Rationale, Why, When

Transitional Statement

CLOSURE: Summary

Teacher Summarizes Phase 2
- the skill highlighted
- key learnings or benefits of the Conference

FOLLOW UP: Next Steps

Who does What, By When?

Type 'B' conferences are similar, except they add a third phase intended to encourage the teacher to generate examples of alternative ideas or behaviours which would have helped achieve the objective of the lesson. Once these have been identified, the teacher is asked to choose one which she will attempt to use in a future lesson.

The 'C' conference requires the observer to look specifically for skills which the teacher has identified as concerns. In this conference the observer assumes more of a coaching stance, thus pushing the teacher to refine or expand his or her use of a skill. In a 'D' conference, by comparison, the observer could identify a skill which the teacher misunderstands, then proceed to re-teach it.

Bentley's (1987) research indicated that consultants generally felt that despite requests from teachers to move into 'C' or 'D' conferences, it was essential for them to closely limit their involvement to 'A' and 'B' conferences.

In a recent conversation, one of the TEP consultants suggested that both 'B' and 'C' conferences promoted professional growth and were essential in a peer coaching context for teachers who had completed the basic TE Program. He felt, however, that there was no place for a 'D' conference in peer coaching (J p.117).

Teachers' Reactions to the TEP

Despite the many criticisms which have been aimed at the effective teaching research, one common significant characteristic of the programs which have developed as a result of it, has been the apparent popularity of the findings with practising teachers. In order to understand better the TEP, let us briefly examine teachers' reactions to this program from the perspective of Louise Bentley's recent research, from the perspective of the Forest Grove teachers currently in the TE Program, and from the perspective of Forest Grove 'graduates' of the Program.

Bentley's Research. The study of the TEP by Bentley (1987) was based on data obtained through a questionnaire which included both Likert-style and open-ended questions. She solicited the reactions of thirty new participants, thirty previous participants, thirty administrators, and fifteen consultants, to all aspects of the Teacher Effectiveness Program. From a 91% return rate she found that:

> Over 95% of the respondents felt the program was excellent, that it reinforced their classroom management and instructional skills and over 95% of the respondents indicated they planned on using or did use these skills in teaching. Over 90% of the respondents indicated there had been an improvement in their classroom management skills and instructional skills as a result of having been in the program. Over 90% also stated that the ETP had confirmed their philosophy of teaching. (p.64)

Bentley identified seven factors which her data implied were the most important to its success [numbers in brackets indicate the percentage of responses favouring a factor] : consultant (57%), conferencing (40%), participant's commitment (23%), content (22%), school time inservices (22%), continuous program (21%), teacher interaction (16%). In an open-ended question which, although separate, was related, the respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of the strengths of the Program. The replies were grouped into eight categories which are listed here in descending order: content, awareness and reinforcement [of teaching ability], collegial interaction, process, improved teaching skills, consultant, psychic benefits, common vocabulary.

Bentley found that often the four groups in her sample had different perceptions. The consultants, for example, did not rate the importance of their involvement as highly as the other three groups. On the other hand, they placed a higher priority on the importance of inservice sessions during school hours. Not surprisingly, she discovered that the administrator's group used the conferencing skills significantly more often than the teachers' groups.

The participants in Bentley's study indicated four areas of concern associated with the TE Program. These included disruptions caused by the teachers' attendance at inservice sessions, the cost to the school for replacement teachers, the lack of content and presentation consistency by the various consultants, and the occasionally limited and limiting nature of the classroom management and instructional skills curriculum. (Bentley; 1987, p.89)

In her final conclusion, Bentley stated that:

> There is no question that the Effective Teaching Program is considered a success by the participants. The following areas are identified as key elements in its success and should be maintained as essential parts of the program.
>
> 1. The program runs as a series of sessions offered over an extended period of time with sessions every two weeks.
> 2. The program is based on theory, modeling, practice and feedback.
> 3. The content is meaningful, relevant and practical.
> 4. Feedback is provided for teachers in their own classroom by a coach.
> 5. The program is based on teacher interchange and a collegial relationship between participants.
> 6. Consultants are knowledgeable, skilled and respected by the participants. (ibid, p.99)

Teachers Presently Attending the TEP. Four teachers from the Forest Grove School are presently attending the TE Program. All are experienced teachers with from eight to eleven years experience, often spread over a much longer period. They were interviewed in November, one month into the Program, and again in February, approximately halfway through the inservice sessions. In both of these group interviews and in other casual conversations, two prominent features were emotional responses to the program and emotional responses to visits by the consultant. Since symbolic interactionist theory identifies emotional responses as a sensitizing concept, a brief examination of these responses may add depth to our understanding of the TEP element in the peer coaching context.

Anne, one of the F.G.E.S. teachers, reacted positively to her initial involvement in the TEP:

> It's nice to learn that you are doing something right. We are getting a lot of positive feedback from this. (p.435)

The others shared this feeling, but two of them expressed frustrations which related to their individual learning styles. They longed for a program overview which allowed them to relate the program parts to the whole. Anne, like the consultant, preferred to deal with one skill at a time:

> I like to have it broken up. I like to have just one thing at a time. I found that I was really comfortable with that. I knew he was looking for one specific thing [referring to consultant's observations]. I didn't have to panic or worry about other things he might notice. I felt really good just having one thing at a time and gradually working up to the bigger picture. We must be different kinds of learners or something. (p.436)

Another group of emotional responses was related to observations and conferences of the teachers by the consultant. For three of the four teachers, having someone, other than the principal, observe them teaching, was a novel experience and one which all of them found stressful. Here is Cheryl's comment:

> The first time he came I felt a great deal of stress. I was really tensed up about that. It just seemed like forever. The second time was better. (p.437)

Each of the teachers commented on the consultant's skill at being "invisible" in their classrooms, yet wondered what it would be like with someone less skillful. Although Cheryl's comment implied that the anxiety factor would disappear, this was not to be her experience. Three months later, she graphically described the effect which being observed had on her teaching:

> I still don't feel good about somebody else in my class; I don't know that I ever will. My kids behave differently; I know I do. I even find sometimes that when I don't think I'm upset, I'll forget things - I just do. I find that some of my poorest lessons turn out to be those I've done for observation. They might have been good another time, but it was so - artificial I guess. I just feel so stiff. I can't interact with my children, even though that person doesn't represent a threat to me; at least I don't think she does. I find it more so - [the consultant] bothers me certainly more than when I'm doing it with another teacher. And yet, I feel very relaxed; I don't see him as a threat, but it really bothers me when he comes. (pp.448-449)

This quotation clearly indicates stress associated with visits from both the consultant and the peer coach. This is a dimension which Bentley's study of the TEP failed to explore, but which will be examined more thoroughly in the themes associated with the experience of peer coaching.

One of the teachers who normally employs a centres approach to teaching, expressed her frustration that whenever the consultant observed her, she felt obliged to change to a more direct teaching style. She felt it was necessary to teach large groups of children in order to demonstrate the skill for which he would be observing . Because this was not her method, her awkwardness with this format only added to her anxiety. After discussing her feelings with the consultant, she adopted her normal teaching style and her anxiety subsided. Her dilemma was echoed on another occasion by a colleague who was a librarian; it would likely be shared by other teachers who do not regularly use a direct teaching style, notably primary teachers with backgrounds in early childhood education. Her consultant is aware that situations like this occur. He does not require that teachers change their teaching styles during periods of observation, but he does expect that they will provide a situation which permits him to observe the teacher's use of the skill in question.

The F.G.E.S. 'Graduates' of the TEP. The majority of the Forest Grove staff had completed the TE Program previous to the peer coaching project. From the perspective of hindsight, the key actors often made comments about the Program which revealed their emotional response to it.

Rose had no knowledge of effective teaching prior to her involvement with the TEP. She was encouraged to participate by her principal, who suggested it was an excellent prerequisite to working with a teacher intern. Rose said that she wanted to learn about the principal's method of supervisory conferencing which was a product of the TEP. Rose also hoped the Program would improve her ability to work with student teachers - a particular interest of hers.

Rose found the pace of the TEP sessions was relaxed (J p.41) and the classroom management skills were not relevant to her situation because she had no discipline problems in her class. However, she was very impressed by the instructional skills component of the inservice sessions. Rose said that the parts of a good lesson were a revelation to her, and although she had always used some of them, she added several skills to her repertoire. Rose was also very impressed with the consultant's coaching. He made her feel very special by pointing out all the skills which she unconsciously used in her teaching. Since he was unable to offer practice in coaching within his TEP group, both Rose and Mary joined a TEP support group led by a former consultant, now on the Forest Grove staff. This small group, which met after school, practised scripting lessons and preparing conferences by watching video-taped lessons.

Although she occasionally refers to remembered feelings of anxiety associated with conferencing, (p.91) Rose has generally positive memories and high praise for the TEP as this representative quotation from a conference with Margie indicates:

> I know that the things I do, especially the signalling, where I demand a response from everyone, is something that I only incorporated after Teacher Effectiveness....I can never thank Doug enough for that class that I took; it was so special to me. (p.239)

Mary asked to participate in the TEP during the year when she taught half time. Her curiosity was aroused when Margie, the principal, and another friend participated the previous year. She had been impressed by the contents of their binders and, like Rose, she saw the TE Program as an opportunity to be more helpful to student teachers:

> Prior to last year I had had two student teachers, and I just felt a little bit of a deficit in myself when I was trying to coach them or even label for them what they had done well or maybe what they could work on a little bit more. I thought that I would like to evaluate them to make it meaningful for them; not just to say that they had a good lesson. (pp.331-332)

Implicit in Mary's statement is her desire to learn a technical language which will help her to discuss teaching. Besides these reasons, Mary looked to the Teacher Effectiveness Program to reinforce her present skills and to add some new ones, especially ones which would help her deal effectively with a student who posed a discipline problem.

Mary believes the TEP "made a difference" (p.345) in her teaching because it raised to consciousness the skills she already possessed; it also helped her stop blaming herself for the misbehaviour of a few individuals. Mary described the program as very "comprehensive" (p.332); she said she was never bored nor disappointed by it. For someone like Mary who likes to interact with her peers, one highlight was the opportunity to share ideas with her colleagues:

> Doug gave us a lot of time to share, so one of the things I gained a lot from...was the interaction that happened within the group - people sharing their ideas, or the interaction at the table. He encouraged you not to sit at the same table all the time; not to sit with your own staff. (p.341)

Although anticipation proved worse than reality, Mary still remembers her apprehension about being observed by the TEP consultant. She also recalls worrying about how her students would react and how she would perform when she felt unsure of the skill being observed. Despite previous anxieties, Mary recognizes the Program's value because, before school began in September, she took out her binder and reviewed her notes.

Margie, like Mary, enjoyed the TEP sessions particularly because it gave her an opportunity to get to know her peers better. She related attending with another Forest Grove teacher with whom she had previously only a passing acquaintanceship:

> We took the course together and it really did open up a lot wider field. [Now] we go out for lunches - nothing will come between our Tuesday lunches....We go with other staff members, but it started with teacher effectiveness. (p.404)

Reflecting on the content of the program, Margie described it as "stimulating" and "good" (p.221), but she objected to the style of the conferences:

> I could pretty well tell what she was going to tell me. I felt, why are we going through this if it is

> a format only. Okay, I understand the format; now what can we do with it? That's basically where I'm coming from. (p.221)

Margie's objection to the particular conference format she experienced does not imply that she rejected the idea of peers conferencing peers. Instead she seems to be calling for increased sensitivity in selecting a conferencing format which is appropriate for the developmental stage of the participants.

Nilah, the former TEP consultant who now teaches on the Forest Grove Staff, suggested that for many teachers the coaching component is the most meaningful part of the Program. In this excerpt from an interview transcript, Nilah discusses this point:

> Nilah. The program was developed with three strands and they are interrelated. You find that very experienced teachers find the peer coaching aspect is what makes it meaningful. Also the peer coaching is what allows for the transfer. If you don't have the peer coaching element, some people become very negative.
>
> Researcher. Why would that be?
>
> Nilah. A lot of information coming at them; probably a lot of information that they feel they already know, especially very experienced teachers. Unless they're applying it and actually seeing the difference between watching someone using those skills, the meaning isn't there as much. (p.430)

Summary

The Teacher Effectiveness Program of the Edmonton School Board is a long-term professional development program intended to help teachers and administrators broaden their teaching repertoire particularly in relation to instructional skills, classroom management skills, and coaching skills. The Program has been developed by instructional processes consultants in Edmonton, relying heavily on the effective schools research, the inservice models of Joyce and Showers, Hunter's ITIP model of instructional skills, and the Dreikurs' model of classroom management. The resulting program is characterized by its technical language and quasi-scientific breakdown of behaviours associated with teaching.

The TEP constitutes a significant element in the peer coaching context because the majority of Forest Grove teachers, including all of the key informants, were trained in this program. The process skills of the TEP are seen by the participants as a normal means to the goal of peer coaching; the TEP vocabulary is regularly employed when discussing the peer coaching project; teachers seem to infer a causal relationship between the TEP and the peer coaching project. Teachers' reactions to the TEP indicated that although teachers generally regard it as highly relevant to teaching, some individuals found conferencing stressful while others objected to the conference format.

CHAPTER FIVE

PEER COACHING: DESCRIBING THE LINES OF ACTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe how the elements outlined in Chapter 4 interacted to constitute the lines of action seen as the peer coaching project. In symbolic interactionist theory, lines of action occur when individuals interact in joint action. Lines of action represent the combining of personal definitions by actors each of whom brings his/her own biography to a common setting in which each must develop a personal definition of the situation. Peer coaching: describing the lines of action, attempts to describe what happened when Rose, Mary, and Margie, all of whom have backgrounds in the Teacher Effectiveness Program, took part in the peer coaching project at Forest Grove Elementary School.

Getting Started

Although different staff members have somewhat different memories of how the peer coaching project originated at Forest Grove School, everyone agrees that it was first discussed in the spring of 1987. There seem to have been three factors which prompted the project idea. The first was a series of long-standing requests by teachers who had completed the TE Program for a school program which would help them maintain their skills. A second factor may have been the fact that team-teaching already occurred at the school. This activity, which involved the librarian and various teachers, was highly valued by the participants. The staff may have felt that peer coaching offered some of the same features which they appreciated in team-teaching. The third, and apparently most important factor, related to school goals. In 1987-88, one of the district priorities was "to enhance employee effectiveness, satisfaction, and the opportunity for involvement in the decision-making process" (CD, March 9, 1987). The staff subsequently set as a school priority "to enhance employee effectiveness and satisfaction" and a budget committee explored ways this might be accomplished. This committee recommended that the staff implement a peer coaching project in the fall of 1987. The idea was discussed at a staff meeting; as there appeared to be general support for the idea, it became part of the school's action plan. To facilitate the peer coaching project, the school requested and received permission to dismiss one hour earlier, one day per week. There was to be no loss of instructional time since the time was made up by increasing the length of the other teaching days.

Introducing Peer Coaching to the Staff

The first day that the Forest Grove Staff returned from their summer vacation, the principal reminded them of the staff commitment to the project. However, as the children would be returning in two days time, the first day's meetings concentrated on the opening of school. The following morning, peer coaching figured more prominently on the agenda. The principal explained briefly that peer coaching was intended to provide an opportunity for teachers to observe one another teach and then talk about it in a positive and encouraging way. Peer coaching, she said, offered an opportunity to talk about teaching - something the staff had long requested.

After this introduction, each teacher was invited to comment, ask questions, or raise concerns. Those teachers with a TEP background tended to comment from that perspective. Rose, for example, mentioned that the conferencing format might be difficult to learn and perhaps should be taught in an inservice session. Mary de-emphasized the importance of a conferencing format and encouraged her colleagues to learn from one another. Others raised questions about whether it was best to seek a partner who taught the same grade or at least the same division [division one refers to grades K-3; division two refers to grades 4-6]. Some teachers expressed uneasiness at the thought of observing and being observed. Most, however, reacted enthusiastically and positively to the peer coaching idea and generally encouraged one another to enjoy the experience. One sentiment, which both the teachers and the principal emphasized, was to "keep it loose" (FN pp.3-5).

As the various teachers commented on the project, the principal, in turn, made a series of comments which helped set the initial tone for the project. She emphasized the voluntary nature of peer coaching and de-emphasized the need for perfect conferences. The principal said that it was important to be comfortable with one's coaching peer and to enjoy the experience. She expressed her hope that peer coaching would be an experience which would enable teachers to grow professionally. She referred to the coaching sequence as writing down what is said, highlighting, and commenting. The principal emphasized there were no tests and no hidden lists. Peer coaching was between the two teachers; if teachers chose to sit and talk, that was acceptable. A good conference was described as one which was enriching for both of the participants. Peer coaching did not need to be the same for everyone or for every team (FN pp.4-5).

Organizing for Peer Coaching

The first peer coaching task for teachers was to find a colleague with whom to collaborate. Although teachers inquired about such criteria as grade level, teaching experience, or a background in the TE Program, the criterion emphasized by the principal was the importance of selecting someone with whom each would be comfortable. For some, this was an easy task; for others it was more difficult and several looked to the principal for advice or facilitation.

Within two weeks, seven peer coaching teams had been formed. Two of these teams were composed exclusively of TEP graduates: Rose and Mary, Margie and Bev. Several of the teams contained teachers enrolled in the TE Program; only one team lacked someone with some knowledge of the TEP. The music and French specialists did not participate in this phase of the project.

A staff memorandum of September 15th listed the teams and described the arrangements for classroom coverage and peer coaching times. The principal, the vice-principal, the former TEP consultant, the school aides, and the school secretary provided release time for the teachers who would be observing. Observations were scheduled to occur between 1:45 and 2:15 on an early-dismissal day. Conferences were scheduled from 2:30 until 3:00, following school dismissal. Peer coaching sessions were initially planned for every two weeks so that each team would complete one cycle per month. The memo suggested that the initial peer coaching session, scheduled for September 17th, should involve getting acquainted, goal sharing, and planning, rather than an actual in-class observation:

> Share how you've set up your class. What your class is like. How you cope with the differences. The little things you enjoy; challenges you're facing. Just generally enjoy your time together. Could you also discuss what you hope to get out of the program. What help will you need?
> (CD September 17, 1987)

The memo further mentioned that Nilah, the former TEP consultant, would be acting as "in-house expert" and would be available to teachers for inservice assistance or general support. The section of the memo regarding peer coaching ended by reiterating the tone emphasized at the initial session with the staff:

> Let's have fun. Remember, keep it light and enjoyable. (CD September 17, 1987)

Although there were no peer coaching inservice sessions prior to September 17th, teachers were advised that sessions would be offered each week peer coaching was scheduled. Both Nilah and the principal usually attended these sessions. Nilah indicated that a few teachers, generally those without a background in TEP, attended. She said that these teachers had requested more direction in terms of a topic or an idea of what to do with their peer:

> What we've been doing is the Tuesday prior to the peer coaching, at a lunch hour, just sitting down with a small group of people and sharing a little bit about a topic; taking Doug Ward's handout from the previous effective teaching and flipping through and picking one small segment that would be easy to pick up on and introduce to people. By no means

> giving them a wide range of topics; just something that they can get an idea from. (pp.427-428)

The discussions covered both instructional skills and conferencing techniques, but Nilah emphasized that they purposely kept the material simple and promoted a sense of "fun-sharing between teachers" (p.428).

On September 30th, another memorandum to all staff outlined the peer coaching schedule for the fall term. This represented phase one of the project and the period of data collection. Seven sessions were indicated - the first was the goal-sharing session on September 17th; the last was advertised as an evaluation session in which teachers could share their highlights and their frustrations and help plan for the remainder of the year. This meant that phase one consisted of five regular peer coaching sessions.

The memo reminded teachers that some teams planned to observe for the skill currently being studied by the four teachers attending the TEP sessions. While teams would be advised of these skills, they were free to choose any topic.

Rose and Mary

Following the initial description of peer coaching and the request to select a partner, Rose Thompson, a grade one teacher, asked Mary Michaels, a grade three-four teacher, to peer coach with her. Rose and Mary had been acquainted since their arrival from different schools when Forest Grove opened. This year their classrooms were adjacent, and they had agreed that their classes would be "buddies" for the year. Both had attended TEP sessions the previous year; both were conscientious, hard-working teachers who occasionally 'visited' one another at noon or after school.

Goal-setting

The first peer coaching session was scheduled for September 17th at 2:30. Normally Forest Grove students are dismissed at 3:30 but as this was early-dismissal day, they left one hour earlier. The principal called a brief, impromptu meeting to review the proposed arrangements and to answer any questions. One teacher questioned whether enough time had been allocated both to prepare for and conduct a conference. The principal's reply implied that a conference which had a rigid structure including several steps would likely require more time than was available. She said it was important for each team to decide what they wanted to get out of peer coaching. She said she wanted each team to decide for themselves the amount of desirable structure.

Immediately after that meeting Rose and Mary sat down to discuss their goals for peer coaching. Mary indicated that her goal was to feel comfortable working with Rose. She said she expected to feel self-conscious about coaching, but she hoped they could develop a format which would feel natural (FN p.14). Rose agreed with Mary and said she looked forward to sharing ideas and learning from Mary. They also agreed that a mutual goal would be to improve their conferencing skills. The teachers then proceeded to review their TEP notes, comment on the value of different skills, and identify possible topics for future peer coaching sessions. They decided to begin by looking for indications of positive feeling tone [classroom atmosphere]. The flip of a coin decided that Rose would observe and conference Mary first.

The First Coaching Session

On October 1st, at approximately 1:45, one of the school aides arrived to cover Rose's class; Rose then entered Mary's room and sat at a table off to one side. Mary proceeded to teach a lesson on graphing and Rose immediately began to record as much of the verbal exchange as possible. After approximately twenty-five minutes, when Mary mentioned dismissal, Rose quietly left the room, retired to a conference room, and began to analyze her five pages of notes. She did this by underlining examples of feeling tone, and a number of instructional or class management skills which she was able to identify. Rose concentrated intensely as she worked quickly - underlining, circling, jotting down abbreviations for identified skills.

After about fifteen minutes, she returned to Mary's room, waited until the last child left the room, and then, sitting at the table with Mary, began her conference.

In addition to her script of Mary's lesson, Rose had a two-page conference planning guide which she had used in the support group organized the previous year by Nilah, the former TEP consultant. This guide, a copy of which appears in Appendix B, provides an outline for a conference based on an 'A' conference model. It suggests an introduction, a clarification of objectives, a description of the lesson by both the teacher and the observer, an identification of the attributes and uses for the skill by the observer, a summary statement by the teacher, and final encouragement by the coach. Rose had prepared this outline at noon and used it as the format for her conference.

In her introduction to the conference, Rose thanked Mary for this opportunity to observe her teach. She also commented on the attractive display of children's work around the room. After Mary explained the background to the display, Rose outlined the sequence she intended to follow in the conference. She said that there was a two-fold purpose to the conference: to raise Mary's use of feeling tone to a level of consciousness and to learn about conferencing skills. Mary briefly shared her feelings about the lesson and noted that in addition to feeling tone she had attempted to use such TEP skills as set, time on task, wait time, low-key responses, sequence, and guided practice. Rose then began systematically going through her notes, identifying the numerous examples she had observed of times when Mary acted to create a positive feeling tone in her room. In addition, she cited examples of Mary's use of positive reinforcement, active participation, accountability, set, and wait time. Rose ended her analysis by explaining the rationale associated with feeling tone in a classroom. When Mary was asked for her summary of Rose's comments, she expressed her pleasure at the positive comments and her astonishment at Rose's thorough analysis:

> Well, Rose, you are blowing me away! You noticed all these things and you have all this stuff written down. Some of the things that you picked out, like my voice and my feeling tone...I guess it has become part of my teaching....I knew you were coming today, but I didn't sit down and write a long lesson plan where I was going to include feeling tone....It was rewarding for me to see all those different things that you noticed and also you did very well to pick out all those things. It sounds like you've had a lot of practice at this. I'm hoping that I'll be as good as you when I'm listening to you. (pp.30-31)

Rose pointed out that this was her first conference involving another teacher. Like Mary, she had only practised the previous year after watching video-tapes. Referring to the conference planning guide, Rose indicated one of her goals for peer coaching:

> I wanted to learn to follow that format and I'm hoping that by the time you and I are finished I won't need this [guide] - that it will be automatic - a natural for me. (p.31)

Rose brought their first peer coaching conference to a close by congratulating Mary on "a super lesson" (p.32). With the formal conference out of the way, the women moved to other topics which were on their minds. Mary immediately raised a topic which was to surface repeatedly during the project:

> It is a hard time of the afternoon to start a new lesson. It's the last half hour before the kids go home and actually you're starting to get ready at 2:10, especially if there are notes or anything to give out. To me it was really hard to be starting a lesson at that time of day. I would already be into a lesson and the children would be working and finishing up. (p.33)
>
> For me it was kind of artificial - not the lesson, because that's how I teach the lesson anyway - but to be doing it at that time of day. (p.34)

Mary mentioned that some of her friends felt that the first half hour of the afternoon would be easier and more natural because then a teacher would be starting a new lesson.

Looking ahead to her planned peer coaching session with Rose, Mary suggested that Rose take the time of day into consideration:

> Do something that the kids are going to enjoy at that time of the day. To me, so what if all the parts of a lesson aren't there. That's not the purpose of this. (p.35)

An announcement at 3:11 reminded Rose and Mary that all staff were expected to attend grade level meetings following peer coaching. The informal discussion which began after their more formal conference, abruptly ended and they went to their separate meetings.

Emotional Responses to Coaching

Both Rose and Mary responded emotionally prior to and after the first conference. The spectrum of emotions displayed by both teachers in their journals is a significant indication of the initial feelings associated with peer coaching for these women. Rose referred to her feelings of apprehension in a September 10th entry. After the planning session on September 17th, she expressed happiness to be working with Mary, but expressed fear of "flubbing up" her conference scheduled for October 1st. The presence of the researcher added to her sense of anxiety, but Rose indicated her determination to see the project through. Rose's October 1st journal entry, written after her conference with Mary, shows both her anxiety and her attitude toward it:

> It's over!!!! I'm sure the first time for this is the worst. I was cold from head to foot; my hands were like icicles... I felt so insecure and incapable of going through with this. I know that often the things we fear and dread the most are the things we really learn from. (FN p.57)

Rose described her "wild" efforts (FN p.58) to write down everything Mary said and her frustration at not being able to get it all down. She expressed amazement that she was able to make mental notes on specific teaching strategies as she scripted Mary's lesson. She felt that her preparation of the conference planning guide at noon had facilitated her script analysis prior to the conference after school. Going into the conference, Rose felt fairly confident that she could work through the steps of her format. Looking back on the experience, Rose suggested that it had been a "good day" for her (FN p.60).

Mary's journal of September 17th, the day of the planning session, mentioned that even after years of supervision, she still found it stressful to have someone observing her. The idea of conferencing someone else was also causing some anxiety - an emotion with which she was familiar:

> I'm feeling anxious about trying to conference, but there's one way for me to overcome the anxiety and that is to practise at it so that I gain confidence. (FN p.52)

While taking comfort in her partner's high level of commitment to teaching, Mary also alluded to being somewhat intimidated by it:

> Rose is such a devoted teacher that I can't help but learn from working with her. On the other hand, I do feel some stress because she's such a conscientious, dedicated teacher. (FN p.52)

Mary's feelings of discomfort were still evident in her journal entry after the first conference with Rose. She wondered aloud why she had agreed to participate in the project since her friends seemed so "relaxed" at noon while she was feeling so "uptight" (FN p.45). Mary said that she felt more relaxed once she began to teach and she reflected on the tricks emotions play:

> So why all the anxiety? That's me, but I do want to work on not feeling anxiety about Rose and Neil watching me teach. (FN p.45)

Mary expressed her pleasure at the way Rose had understood her class atmosphere. Rose had been able to identify several of Mary's methods for encouraging behaviour that she felt were important. This made her feel good about the conference. Yet with the positive feeling, there remained the nagging uncertainty:

> It was exhilarating to have Rose conference me, and many of my concerns about whether peer coaching could be a positive experience have disappeared. I am concerned about my abilities as a conferencer. Rose set high standards and I'll try to make her next experience as rewarding as mine was. (FN p.46)

The question of how Mary would conference Rose was still very much on her mind a week after the first conference. She was familiar with the format Rose had followed. She had practised it in Nilah's after-school support group and referred to it as difficult and too formal for her. She did not object to its use by a consultant, but her goals were different. She said that she needed some structure in her conferences, to provide direction, but hesitated to adopt a formal approach to conferencing. Asked about her priorities in peer coaching, Mary replied:

> I would lean a little more toward the personal interaction. One reason being that I know that the people on our staff are already strong. I enjoy getting the positive feedback... but to me it would be the interaction with another person - you would learn and you would grow just from interacting with

> them and maybe not spending so much time on this formal thing, but afterwards talking. I can learn so much and gain so much just from sitting down and talking to someone about their lesson, or something I noticed in their classroom, maybe a centre they had, or how they handled some kid. (p.340)

With only one week remaining until her scheduled conference with Rose, Mary felt caught between her own goals and what she perceived as Rose's expectations in this partnership. She verbalized her dilemma easily enough but implied that making a decision would be much more difficult:

> I'm not sure if I want to go really formal as she did because that is really not me. I could make myself go that way. Or whether I shouldn't go that way. But I think, well, if I don't go that way, Rose won't get all the feedback she wants. I'm not sure; maybe I should be talking to her more. I'm not quite sure what she wants to get out of it. I got a lot out of hers, but Rose spent all last Thursday noon working on her conference. That's not for me. Thursday noon, I choose to go out and have lunch with some of the staff. To me, that's important that I do some socializing...that's one of the commitments that I made to myself.... So I'm already sort of in a dilemma.... I feel some pressure because I see Rose having set a precedent and I'm not sure if that's for me or not. I don't want to disappoint her. (p.334)

Six days later, and one day before the second peer coaching session, the principal advised the researcher that Mary was dropping out of the project. Margie would replace Mary on the peer coaching team with Rose; Mary's new partner would be Bev. The principal cited the added stress of participating in the research project as a factor in the request for a change of partners. From the perspective of December, Mary looked back on her decision and commented:

> That stage of September-October was not a good time for me because I was under a lot of stress with the three-four split, having been half-time and coming back full-time. It was just a lot of things for me. Then you, you were another element; I didn't anticipate that. I'm not saying that as a negative against you; it's just how I reacted to it. It was a whole lot of things thrown together that made it so that when peer coaching first started, I thought, 'Wow, this is something I don't need at this stage. It's an extra. I'm feeling a lot of stress and I don't need more stress'. But anyway, it's gone, and I'm not saying this because I changed people .... At this stage, I'm really enjoying peer coaching. I like the way things are going. (p. 357)

Mary and Bev

Although Mary ceased to be a direct focus of the peer coaching study, she obligingly continued to share her experiences through her journal; she also consented to give an interview at the completion of the phase one conferences. Mary's continuing perspective is significant because it provides a continuity with her initial goals and it also provides insight into the interaction of another peer coaching team.

Mary's journal entries reveal that her conferences with Bev followed a similar pattern to the conference by Rose, but with less emphasis on skill identification and more on practical and collegial concerns. The new team agreed that they would not change a lesson in anticipation of a peer's visit. They also decided to remain in the class to analyze their notes. Several other mutual adaptations were evident in the conference itself. Here is Mary's description of a conference with Bev:

> We don't follow a formal conference agenda. We thank each other for letting the other person come in and then go through the notes we made in the margin, depending on the item we are looking at that day. But we also make notes of other things that come to mind as you are looking at your notes afterward.... After we have gone through the formal conferencing, going through the notes and discussing that, then Bev and I usually have time for a general talk about how things are going, or what are you doing in this situation. It is just sort of a sharing of ideas beyond the items that you noted in the conference. I find that rewarding too. It's a time you get to sit down with someone and talk teaching. (pp.348-349)

Mary mentioned that the topics she and Bev had discussed ranged over a variety of topics: how to teach math to split grades, developing responsibility among students, comparing curricular problems, discussing the progress some of her students were making in grade five. Mary estimated that their time was about evenly split between feedback on observed skills, and conversations about practical, professional, and personal concerns. In December, Mary said she was enjoying peer coaching and felt the time spent with her peer was valuable. She had found the amount of time initially allocated for conferencing made her feel pressured. However, since the length of the coaching sessions had been increased from thirty to forty-five minutes, she felt less rushed. While looking forward to the evaluation meeting later that month, Mary was generally pleased with the way peer coaching was unfolding. She felt that sessions every second week were a reasonable compromise with other staff projects which needed to be addressed.

Mary indicated that one of her goals in taking the TE Program and in peer coaching had been to help her work more effectively with student teachers. At one point she had wondered if developing technical conferencing skills would be the best way to achieve this. She now rejected this idea yet believes that the structure which the Program provides can help her achieve her goal:

> But as far as the real formal conferencing, I know that I wouldn't talk like that to a student teacher.... I have that feeling tone in my head so I can translate it, as you say, into more generic terms. I'm glad that I have [TEP] there, because it gives me something to look for - the different things. Even if you talked about their lesson, you could talk about how their lesson flowed well; you would be looking for active participation and did they have set and so on. You wouldn't necessarily use the word set but you could talk about why their lesson went well and maybe what they could do to make it go a bit better. (p.363)

Looking ahead to phase two of the project, Mary had mixed feelings about changing partners. While she expressed interest in sharing ideas with another teacher, she was quite content to continue to explore teaching with Bev. Mary felt that, so far, she and Bev had mainly been providing one another with feedback rather than coaching. Mary suggested that coaching occurred when "you do have some meaningful suggestions where maybe they might be able to change something or push a little bit or improve" (p.366). Although Bev had provided several opportunities for coaching, Mary said that she hesitated to say anything to an experienced teacher which might reflect negatively on her teaching. She could envision, however, setting-up mutual goals to make suggestions for improving teaching. Under those circumstances, she felt it would be better to stay with her present partner. While generally advocating that peer coaching participants were in the best position to decide whether or not to change partners, Mary suggested there was a significant role to be played by another person outside the team:

> I think it is better if you let the people decide. If you are going to work with someone, you must have a positive feeling that you want to work with that person and it will be a positive experience for you. To me, there would have to be someone who would monitor the atmosphere, the emotional scene, or whatever you want to call it. (p.359)

Mary implied that a principal's knowledge of the staff and ~~individuals~~ individual could qualify her for such a role, as "there would have to be someone to monitor the situation" (p.359).

Peer coaching turned out to be a positive experience for Mary. She felt that she had been able to achieve her goals of sharing ideas with a colleague and being comfortable in the relationship.

Rose and Margie

Margie agreed, on very short notice, to become Rose's new peer coaching partner. Margie taught grade five every morning and kindergarten every afternoon. Her previous partner had been Bev, also a grade five teacher. Margie had known Rose since their common arrival at Forest Grove; for two years their rooms had been adjacent to one another. Yet, until their first peer coaching session on October 15th, neither had observed the other teach. Continuing the pattern already in progress, it was Margie's turn to observe and conference Rose.

The First Conference

When the time for the first observation arrived, Rose had her grade one students sitting together on the floor, waiting for Margie to arrive. A table with adult-sized chairs had been conveniently placed near the children from where Margie could observe and take notes. When Margie and the researcher arrived, we were introduced to the class and our presence explained simply. Rose then taught a lesson on the colours of the rainbow using food colouring in water to illustrate the primary and secondary colours. Margie scripted busily for about twenty minutes, then stopped writing and simply watched the last part of the lesson being taught. While the children were being dismissed, Margie analyzed her script and made brief notes in the margin. When the last of the children had been hugged out the door, Rose joined Margie at the table and their first conference began.

The teachers expressed their mutual pleasure at finally having an opportunity to observe one another teaching. Margie indicated that she had observed for feeling tone which was the suggested school topic for peer coaching. She began by asking Rose to comment on how she felt about her lesson. Rose's reply reflected the confidence which she displayed in her teaching:

> I really love what I do and there probably isn't a lesson that I ever do that I don't feel good about, because when you think a lesson through and you know how you want to teach it and what you want to accomplish, it usually works out. I made sure the components of a good lesson were there. (p.233)

Margie proceeded to give examples of various means by which Rose had created a positive, friendly atmosphere [feeling tone] in her classroom. One example cited was Rose's habit of using the expression "I invite you" when asking children to participate in an activity. Rose had not realized before that this was her way of involving the students and she expressed considerable pleasure at this insight. After she had identified several other ways that Rose created a positive feeling tone, Margie summarized quickly:

> The thing that I felt permeated the whole lesson right through was that there were so many times in your class that you helped your students feel that they were vitally important. Examples were: I need

> your help; clap for - You helped a child correct his wrong answer rather than get another child to correct it for him....Anyway Rose, that was just a fantastic lesson. I enjoyed being in here. (p.238)

Rose was invited to add any further comments. She briefly paid tribute to the TE Program for identifying for her many of the skills she uses and for adding to her repertoire.

At that point the planned part of the conference ended, approximately fifteen minutes after it began. What followed might be described as an informal conference. With the tape recorder shut off, the conversation of these teachers flowed more naturally and a range of topics was discussed. As they had not had an opportunity to share their peer coaching goals previously, they seized on this opportunity. Margie said that she had found the TEP skills interesting, but that they were not something she wanted to focus on. She said that she was more interested in talking with other teachers about their programs and sharing ideas. It was for this reason that she had originally asked to work with Bev, a grade five teacher. Both of them were relatively new to grade five and they wanted to help one another, particularly on curricular issues. On the other hand, Margie felt secure in her kindergarten background and did not feel the same need to focus on new ideas there. Margie wondered if she would have to re-think her goals in view of this new partnership.

Rose described to Margie her goal to become an expert conferencer and her desire to use this expertise to assist student teachers. She said that she felt that they each could have their different goals and work together happily. An announcement reminding teachers of a general staff meeting brought to a close the first conference between Rose and Margie at 3:10 p.m..

Looking Backward and Forward

In an interview after her conference with Rose, Margie reflected on the peer coaching situation she had left and wondered about her new one. It was clear that two features she liked about her arrangement with Bev had been their mutual interest in programming for grade five and their mutual aversion to a formal conference format:

> I guess what I was really looking forward to and I think [Bev] was too is that we were getting into each other's classrooms and being able to talk about programming. We were not locked in to teacher effectiveness as it stood; ... if there was anything that I didn't enjoy about teacher effectiveness, it was the format for the conference, because I thought it was canned. I could sit back and I knew exactly what was going to be said to me and I knew exactly what my response had to be. (p.220)

Margie described how she and Bev had agreed to adapt their peer coaching sessions so that the spirit of the staff project was honoured, yet they were able to accomplish their own personal goals:

> I wrote all this [script] out just like with Rose. We went through what we considered a quick format of what theoretically we covered that we thought we had

> to. Then I went on to just talking. I think that that part we gained a lot from, just sitting and chatting about the way she handled things ... I have some of her students and we talked about them, and she's doing a different concept in reading and I was interested, and likewise, I do a very different concept. Like my active comprehension model is different from what she is doing. So it would have been great just to sit and share. (pp.221-222)

Margie said that she felt there was room for this kind of flexibility in the peer coaching envisioned at Forest Grove School. She appreciated some focus to help get teachers started, but hoped that her new peer would be willing to explore new horizons. Margie had known Rose for several years and mentioned that they often talked about school matters. She implied that their relationship was built around education and that beyond that there had been little personal involvement. However, built on the rapport already established, Margie looked forward to a peer relationship with Rose from which they both could benefit:

> I hope that maybe she can come to appreciate some of the things that are happening [in kindergarten] and likewise I can see some of the needs she has to have over there. I don't want my program to become similar to hers, but by the same token, I want to be very much aware of her objectives to find out how I can approach getting my [kindergarten] children ready for those objectives in the way I'm dealing with the children. Because I think that it doesn't matter what way you're teaching, the outcomes can be similar. (p.224)

The Second Conference

Two weeks after their first peer coaching session, it was Rose's turn to observe and conference Margie in her kindergarten. Rose sat at a table from where she could observe Margie and the children as they chose a centre in which to work. Margie's kindergarten is organized according to an early childhood philosophy which encourages chilren to 'play freely' in pre-planned activity centres during designated parts of the program. As the children made their choices and scattered to the various centres, Rose followed Margie who went to interact with two boys in the math centre. When Margie moved on to other centres, Rose remained at her centrally-located table and attempted to script a succession of conversations which Margie had with the children at each of the seven centres. The pattern during the remainder of the observation period was similar as Margie moved from centre to centre, questioning, commenting, and generally acting as a catalyst to the interactions at each site. When the dismissal sequence began, Rose remained at her table and began to analyze her three and a half pages of script in preparation for the conference. When the last of the children left, Margie joined her at the table and the conference began.

Rose thanked Margie for the opportunity to observe her teaching. She acknowledged that the staff's suggested peer coaching focus for that session was low key responses, but she indicated that she had attempted to identify Margie's use of these strategies plus "stretch herself" (FN p.90) by identifying other TEP skills as well. Rose used the same conference planning guide as she had in her first conference with Mary. This acted as an outline for her conference when used in conjunction with her scripted notes. Rose quickly explained the sequence of the conference and then asked for Margie's description of the observation period. Margie briefly outlined what her students had done during the afternoon and where the observation period fitted into that sequence. Rose then proceeded to the next step in the conference by citing examples of how Margie employed various effective teaching skills in her program. In spite of the centre arrangement and the fluidity of the students and their teacher, Rose was able to identify not only examples of such classroom management skills as signalling, proximity, and minimal verbal responses, but also examples of instructional skills and strategies such as knowledge of results, set, modelling, checking for understanding, questioning strategies, accountability, and feeling tone. She noted that she had been unable to observe facial gestures and eye contact because Margie was constantly on the move.

During Rose's analysis of the script, Margie sat quietly, listening; from time to time she interjected a brief comment. On one occasion, when Rose mentioned Margie's attempt to teach phonics to a child, the teachers started to discuss the different expectations between kindergarten and grade one. However, Rose quickly brought the focus back to her script and continued her analysis. As the analysis ended, Rose reviewed the nine skills associated with low key responses, then asked Margie to summarize. Margie expressed her amazement at Rose's skill at following the conference format, and her surprise at the large number of skills and strategies she had been able to observe and identify. "I think you have already accomplished your goal" [to conference well] (p.115), Margie suggested. Margie went on to explain that centre time was important in the kindergarten program because it allowed for the developmental discrepancies among her students and gave her a chance to interact at appropriate levels with each.

Negotiation. At this point, approximately twenty minutes into the conference, the two peers moved away from the formal analysis of Margie's teaching and into a ten minute period of discussions which might be described as negotiation of their peer coaching relationship. This had not been done earlier, probably because each had had a different partner when the goal-setting session was held on September 17th.

Margie introduced the first item for negotiation when she asked what impact it would have on Rose if she followed her inclination and continued with centre time instead of attempting to teach a formal lesson. Margie explained that she had considered creating a lesson for Rose to observe but was torn between doing what she felt her class needed and what her peer partner might expect. She said that circumstances that afternoon had left her with little choice but to follow the normal pattern. Rose's reply acknowledged the need to consider the issue together:

> I don't feel it's a problem, but I think that you and I as a team need to have an understanding.... I don't mind if that's the way you want to work. I want this to be a learning experience for me. I need to learn to be flexible in this whole business of observing and to pull out specific things even in a one-to-one or a one-to-two or whatever you are doing with the children. (p.115)

Margie said she would feel most comfortable if Rose followed her from centre to centre. The conference could then focus on any skill or observation Rose chose to pick up at the various centres.

Margie raised a second concern which she had about their different approaches to conferencing:

> In the conferencing, you use a very formal approach. That's fine and great for you. I just hope you don't expect me to use it when I am doing it with you. I find it really hard to follow those steps right through. It just doesn't seem to feel like me all the time, but I hope by the same token, that I can grow through conferencing and be able to give you, in my way, feedback as well. (p.116)

Rose indicated her acceptance of Margie's preference for a less formal structure and inquired whether Margie objected to her more formal one. When Margie said she did not, Rose explained why she preferred her format and would like to continue to use it:

> This makes me focus directly on what the skill is that I'm observing; it makes me go back to my notes and review the specifics of what we were taught and so therefore I am reviewing everything that came up before and I want that for my own personal growth. I want to be able to have this [format] down cold so that by the end of this year, it will be automatic to me and I'll be able to do a conference without the conference planning guide. (p.116)

Margie assured Rose that she did not object to her use of the conference planning guide and her more formal approach to conferencing as long as Rose did not expect Margie to use it as well.

Margie had one other topic which she wanted to discuss with her partner. This was her desire to move beyond an 'A' type conference. This portion of transcript is illustrative of how both women felt about this issue:

> Margie - I hope that both of us can soon move into a 'B' conference.
>
> Rose - [Meaning we explore] how could we have done it differently? I don't mind.
>
> Margie - I like the idea of hearing what I'm doing well, but I'd also like to hear the ideas of another person too. That gives me time to think about it.
>
> Rose - I'm not sure I'll be able to give you any suggestions.
>
> Margie - Oh, you will too! I know you will. Not necessarily next time, but as we do this, I'd like to move into a 'B' conference.
>
> Rose - Well, the interesting question is, will we be together 'til Christmas and will we be together beyond that? If we are together after Christmas, then we will have lots of time to work on a 'B' conference. When you get into a 'B' conference, you really help one another because you do a little

> brainstorming at the end where you ask what could I have done differently and what could I have done to make this a better lesson. I know a fascinating thing was when Doug came out to observe and I knew he was doing a 'B', as I was doing my teaching I was thinking about all the different approaches I could have used.
>
> Margie - Yes, I know. That's what I'd like to move into because it will help me to hear other people's ideas. (pp.116-117)

At that point, one of the teachers recalled that the staff had been asked to meet briefly at 3:10, so they adjourned their second conference. This conference was significant because it completed one cycle for Rose and Margie; each had observed and coached her peer. Also, they had used the conference to share each other's thoughts on three issues of importance to peer coaching: whether to follow the normal class pattern or to teach a special lesson for a peer; whether to structure the conference on a pre-set pattern; whether to provide strictly positive feedback or to try to push one another to explore new options in teaching. On the first two issues, Rose and Margie felt differently, but indicated that each respected the other's right to differ. Neither indicated a concern that their differences might cause difficulties. On the third issue, both expressed an interest in exploring new conferencing options at some future time.

In her journal, written after this conference, Rose said that she found conferencing more difficult in the kindergarten environment when a formal lesson was not taught. However, she felt that the session had gone well and that she had been able to identify the skills she sought and to share them with Margie. Rose mentioned how much she enjoyed using the TEP format for conferencing. She also felt that preparing for the conference had been a good review for her.

In an interview after the conference, Margie also spoke of the conference format:

> I really do find that format is very restrictive. I think that teachers have to be very much aware of the elements of a good lesson and the skills they're using. I really think that once you are aware of them, then you have to move on. I find it very confining, I really do. I guess I don't like anything canned. I really think that even teaching is very spontaneous. I have my plans, but plans certainly go by the wayside when I see other opportunities which are better. I feel that the same goes with this [peer coaching] situation. It can almost lead to anything if you really want it to. (p.227)

The Third Conference

The third conference occurred on November 12th when Margie observed and conferenced Rose. As previously, the observation period was the last half hour prior to early dismissal which began approximately at 2:15. Rose's lesson focused on how animals prepare for the winter. As Margie took up her position at the table, Rose began to tell a story to her class of grade one students sitting on the carpet at her feet. With the aid of props, appropriate voice changes, and a text to which she referred occasionally, Rose told an exciting story about a hamster whose owners concluded was dead because it began to hibernate when the heat in the house suddenly dropped. During the story, the children responded to questions and made predictions about the outcome. Following the story they moved back to their desks from where they participated in a whole class activity. As Rose held up pictures of animals which illustrated various forms of adaptation to the winter, the children responded on a note pad attached to each desk. During this period, Margie made notes at the table; while dismissal was taking place, she prepared for her conference.

Margie began her conference by congratulating Rose on her story-telling skill and by expressing her pleasure at finally having an opportunity to be part of one of Rose's stories. Because of the story format for much of the observation period, Margie chose not to script the story. Instead she jotted down some notes which identified a number of effective teaching techniques employed by Rose during the period of observation. In her three-minute analysis of the technical components, Margie cited examples of how Rose had used set, involved everyone in active participation, raised the children's level of interest, employed a variety of questioning techniques, and positively reinforced her students. When Margie had given one example of each of these skills she said, "I think everything else, I would just pretty well repeat myself" (p.245). This seemed to imply that she chose not to take more time citing additional examples of these same skills. When Rose was invited to comment on her lesson, she reflected on what her plan had been and how it might have been improved. She also related two of the skills she had used, accountability and the participation of every child, to her involvement with the TE Program.

Rose's comments seemed to mark the end of the scheduled agenda for their conference, and the teachers quickly moved away from technical concerns to a variety of other topics. Prior to Margie's analysis of the lesson they had spoken of the power and impact which the story had on the students. They related this to comments made by a key-note speaker who had addressed this very idea at a recent convention attended by both of them. Besides this discussion of a professional nature, in the thirty minute period which followed the technical analysis, Margie and Rose had a series of natural and animated discussions which might be classified at various points as practical, collegial, and personal interactions. One example of the practical component of peer coaching was their discussion of Rose's background of story-telling. Margie learned about a source of story ideas and the kinds of preparation employed by Rose to tell a story. They also discussed the possibility of combining classes after Christmas so that Margie's children could have the benefit of Rose's skill.

Another conversation which contained both a practical and a professional component concerned a student in Rose's room whom Margie had taught the previous year. As they shared concerns about the child's social adjustment, they actually examined samples of work and talked of the merits of retention for some children.

During the course of the conference, first Rose, then Margie, shared biographical information which not only related to the topic but also enhanced their collegial relationship. In turn, each appeared to take personal satisfaction in learning more about the other, both as a person and as a teacher. Although there was a meeting for some of the teachers that afternoon, neither Rose nor Margie was involved. Consequently, the conference lasted longer than previous ones. This conference illustrated five characteristics which seemed significant to the researcher.

1. It illustrated features which the teachers negotiated after their second conference, namely, Margie's informal approach to conferencing; discussions which explored options for improving teaching.

2. The conference had a shortened technical analysis.

3. Other components of the conference were identified as personal, practical, professional, and collegial.

4. The conference had a natural, conversational tone.

5. When time was available, the participants continued their discussions longer than on previous occasions. This conference ended after one hour.

The Final Conference

The fourth and final conference between Margie and Rose occurred on December 3rd. The time interval between the third and fourth peer coaching sessions had been purposely increased because teachers were busy writing report cards and they were then involved with parent-teacher conferences.

This session it was Rose's turn to observe and conference Margie for the second time. When Rose entered the kindergarten, the children were already involved at the activity centres. Rose asked if there would be a formal lesson; Margie replied that the children would be working at the centres and she hoped Rose could make some sense of it. Rose moved to a table where one of the students was attempting some Christmas stitchery. Once seated, she began to script Margie's dialogue as she moved from centre to centre. Since the child who shared the table with Rose found her task difficult, Margie regularly checked on her progress and provided encouragement or instructions. Normally an aide was available to assist this child, but this day Margie was on her own. When not helping the little one, Margie interacted with the students at each of the centres. At one point she called all the students to the block centre where three boys had constructed a model of a hospital which the children had toured the previous day. Margie used the opportunity to probe the children's memories of their excursion and to expand their vocabulary. Since Christmas concerts were imminent, Margie used the last few minutes to combine a class snack with practice for the concert. During this time, Rose stopped scripting and analyzed her notes in preparation for the conference.

When the last kindergarten child departed, Margie joined Rose at the table for the conference. As in her previous conferences, Rose combined the use of a conference planning guide which she had prepared ahead of time, with her two and a half pages of script recorded during the observation period of approximately twenty-five minutes. To introduce the conference, Rose related to her partner at a collegial level by inquiring if Margie would want to teach both grade five and kindergarten another year. She also commented on the sewing activities which she had observed and related these to the development of fine motor skills which transferred to grade one children's ability to manipulate a pencil. Rose used the transitional phrase, "Anyway, we are here today for a specific purpose," to move to the second stage of the conference - outlining objectives. She had chosen to observe for active participation which was the topic suggested for this peer coaching session. This was how Rose outlined the format of her conference:

> First of all, I am going to define the objective of our conference again. I'm going to ask you to share your feelings about what happened in this

> observation time when I was with you. Then I'm going to share with you the observations that I made while I was taking notes and define the skill that we're looking for today. I'm going to ask you to summarize what we've talked about today and give me any input that you feel you wish to. (p.55)

In her overview of the observation period, Margie spoke of the importance of the centres to the development of kindergarten children. She said that she had been "thrilled about what happened in the block centre" (p.57) because teachers do not always get such immediate evidence that their students benefit from field trips. Margie seemed to want to share with Rose the difficulty which she as a kindergarten teacher has 'selling' her program to the public:

> Actually the block centre is one of the most valuable centres there is. It's the hardest one to convince parents that it is important. The parent says, 'My child plays in the block corner. Is that all he does all day?' That is what I get until I explain to them what has happened, what I see in the block centre. Number concepts come through in the block centre; language development comes through in the block centre. It takes a lot of work to convince parents that this is a valuable centre. (p.59)

When Rose expressed amazement that Margie could move from group to group and yet "zero in on specifics" (p.61) such as these so quickly, Margie used her opportunity to elaborate to her colleague on the amount of thought and preparation which goes into each centre:

> Part of the reason for [my ability to interact quickly] is I remember every centre we planned. We have our objectives, even though it looks like everyone is doing their own thing, surprisingly

> enough, it really isn't. We have thought through all that is going on and I know if they're going to do what I'm expecting them to do, although sometimes they will come up with their own creations, which is just great. I have expectations when they go into that centre. Right now, they are becoming very much aware that there are expectations.... They get that choice, but once they get into it they have to finish. (p.62)

These expressions of professional concern by Margie did not lead to a dialogue between the teachers. Instead, Rose proceeded with her analysis of Margie's interactions with the students. She was able to show that all the interactions between Margie and the students were examples of overt or observable active participation. Rose noted Margie's skill at questioning and explained how her making the children accountable helped them focus on their tasks. Although Margie occasionally commented on one of Rose's observations, most of the time spent in this part of the conference consisted of Rose's identification of skills which she had seen in her peer's teaching behaviour. Nearing the conclusion, Rose reviewed the elements of active participation, then asked Margie for her summary. Margie acknowledged the prominent role active involvement played in her kindergarten program. She also thanked Rose for coming and reminded her that "there was nothing different than what normally goes on" (p.80). Rose indicated that she was still interested in seeing Margie teach a regular lesson:

> You know what I hope happens in the new year. This would be fascinating for me and I may have a selfish goal here even to ask this. I would love to come in and watch a lesson from start to finish with your grade fives - a totally opposite kind of thing from this, and just observe in that setting. (p.80)

Margie replied that "a lot of the principles I have here [kindergarten], I apply over there [grade five]" (p.81). Margie implied that Rose would still have difficulty during observation because there was considerable similarity between the way she taught both programs. The conference ended at 3:15 having lasted forty-seven minutes. A time analysis of the parts of this conference provided some indication of the emphasis:

introduction - 11 minutes
identification of objectives - 2 minutes
sharing by Margie - 3 minutes
script analysis by Rose - 30 minutes
summary by Margie - 1 minute

In addition to the time analysis, four characteristics of this conference seemed significant to the researcher:

1. The entire conference followed an 'A' type format and consisted mainly in the identification of technical skills.

2. The skills identified did not result in any dialogues in which the participants explored professional issues or shared practical knowledge.

3. Brief collegial exchanges occurred either during the introduction or at the end of the conference.

4. The conferencer did most of the talking.

Rose's Reflections on Peer Coaching

In her journal, written after the final session of peer coaching, and in an interview held on December 14th, Rose reflected on the issues, the emotions, and the events related to peer coaching. Her first thoughts were about her partnership with Margie. She spoke of the qualities she had come to admire about this teacher who was her coaching peer:

> Her questioning techniques are super. She seems to be always probing and pushing her children and forcing them to make decisions on their own. It is great! I admire her ability to roll with the punches and capitalize on the spontaneous. It has been a good experience to share time and thoughts with Margie. (FN p.121)

Rose said that it was rewarding to be able to see how other teachers operate in their classes. Her peer coaching experience with Margie had made Rose realize just how different were their teaching styles. In particular, Rose observed that, "I use centres in a structured way for very specific skills, and I have my centres monitored" (p.93).

A second set of reflections for Rose focused on the attainment of her original peer coaching goal:

> My goal, of course, was a year-long goal. We have really only been peer coaching three months. My goal was for conferencing to become a part of me. It hasn't yet. I have a lot better feel for it and

> I feel very comfortable with it, but it is not a part of me.... I am really pleased with how well I have done with conferencing. I think I have done better than I ever expected to do because I am to the point now where I am very comfortable and actually starting to feel very confident in my conferencing skills. (pp.82-83)

Looking ahead, Rose foresaw a time when she would feel confident enough with the format to permit deviations from the outline. For the present, she still felt dependent upon it.

Rose spoke at considerable length about possible applications of her conferencing skills with student teachers. She saw more opportunities for using her skills with students than with her peers:

> Really, my whole purpose is not so much to be able to conference my peers but to be able to coach my student teachers when I have them in my classroom. If I can get that far in this year, I will have done an awful lot for professional growth in my own career. (p.85)

Because of this goal, Rose expressed some disappointment that the kindergarten situation had not provided a formal teaching situation so she could focus on lesson preparation and presentation. However, she felt that she still had been able to accomplish her goals. Rose spoke at some length about using her peer coaching skills with student teachers. She envisioned preparing a "nice neat little package" (p.87) of effective teaching skills which she could use with her student teachers. It would be a simplified version of the TEP and would focus first on classroom management skills, then on the elements of a good lesson. She suggested that modifying the conference format so that it could generate some helpful ideas and permit her to teach the students might be the most beneficial:

> I think it has to be a very casual and relaxed and friendly sort of thing which comes across as being for their benefit and to help them become better at preparing their lessons. That would be my whole point in it. (p.92)

Rose recognized that for her to accept one or more student teachers for their practicum placed an additional strain on her. This was especially true since she wanted to give her best to any project to which she committed herself. This created a dilemma for Rose, as she enjoyed working with students, but sometimes felt overwhelmed trying to meet both their needs and those of her class. If she accepted students, there was no doubt in her mind about the importance of including the skills she learned in the TE Program:

> I guess I am just so turned on about teacher effectivess; I think it is the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I would feel that I had cheated my students if I had not given them at least a portion of it when they came out to work with me. (p.87)

A third set of Rose's reflections indicated that she felt peer coaching had been a growing experience for her. This quotation from her journal suggests that growth had occurred in several areas:

> I'm pleased that our school undertook the peer coaching philosophy and put it into practice this

> year. It has been a growing time for me. I think I have become more sensitive to the feelings of others. I've learned some new ideas to try in my class. I've learned to do conferencing quite well. I've overcome my fears. (FN pp.122-123)

Another area of growth appeared to be in Rose's insights regarding the use of an 'A' conference format with other experienced teachers:

> I like the conference format. I guess what I'm saying is, my goal was to become comfortable with it. I accomplished that; I'm comfortable, but not competent. In thinking of having student teachers in the room, I would use the conference format occasionally for the purpose of giving them positive feedback. When dealing with an experienced teacher who has mastered class management and teaching strategies, I don't see where re-hashing the lesson and telling them what a good job they did is really the important thing. I think we need to be positive but I think that we have to go beyond the 'A' conference. (p.108)

Rose acknowledged that because of her goals, she had received more satisfaction out of coaching than being coached but she questioned whether what she and Margie had done should be termed coaching:

> It really is rewarding to be conferenced, but I think that if we are to get anything out of peer coaching, we've got to change the whole idea of what it is all about. We've got to move away from the 'A' conference and we have to zero in on what could have been done differently or how we could have enhanced this lesson. Sharing of ideas is really important and I think this would have happened if we had had more time. (p.100)

In her journal, Rose also mentioned that both conferencing and being conferenced had the potential for professional growth in peer coaching. She felt that she was being coached in the sense that she was picking up good ideas from those she observed. However, Rose concluded that positive feedback, while satisfying, did not promote her professional growth nor help her become a better teacher.

Another issue which concerned Rose was the amount of peer coaching time available. She appreciated the fact that the peer coaching project had provided some time to meet with colleagues, but she felt the length of most sessions had limited the opportunity to socialize:

> We are all so busy preparing for the next day that we don't sit down and share things with our peers. This is a time to do it, but we have a time restraint; there is always something else above and beyond this on Thursdays. Three-quarters of an hour to sit down and discuss the lesson and deal with alternatives is not enough time. That day that Margie and I sat and talked, we went over forty-five minutes. I think we had personal time that day, and that is the thing that we need on the days that we do peer coaching. In order to get down to that personal level, you need to know that you've got time to sit over that second cup of coffee and finish up your conversation. (p.104)

Rose wondered if her concerns and questions would be echoed by others in the up-coming staff evaluation of peer coaching.

Looking to her future in peer coaching, Rose indicated that she felt new peer coaching goals emerging. She said she wanted very much to have opportunities to observe in a variety of other classrooms. She was interested in observing in other kindergarten classes in the school and in the grade two rooms. The latter would give her an opportunity to learn about the expectations other teachers had for children leaving her class. Rose did not expect to be able to see as many classes as she might hope, at least not this year, but she agreed that peer coaching had whetted her appetite to interact with her peers. Rose spoke of another peer coaching model being tried in a neighbouring school. This model teamed several teachers together, but gave each one access to the others' rooms. She seemed attracted by the thought of exploring professional issues in such an arrangement. As if to put the Forest Grove project in perspective, Rose provided this overview which implied that she recognized that the staff had made an important beginning, they had grown professionally, but that there were many opportunities yet to explore in the name of peer coaching:

> All I know is that from where I'm at right now, it's been a wonderful experience; it has been a learning experience in many, many ways. All those components that we talked about are there - the whole emotional thing, the trauma of being observed by a peer. I think a lot of that is over and I know that we have a lot to share with one another. We're not getting together to look at one another critically. We need to get to the point where it is a time of sharing ideas. (p.111)

Margie's Reflections on Peer Coaching

In two interviews held after the final conference and in the committee meeting at the time of the staff evaluation, Margie reflected on her peer coaching experiences. For her, the change of partners led to changing goals. With Bev, they had shared a mutual goal to explore reading ideas for grade five. When she became Rose's partner, this goal was no longer possible. Instead, Margie's goals for peer coaching with Rose were to learn how she taught grade one and to provide her with an opportunity to learn the rationale behind the kindergarten program. The peer coaching program had enabled Margie to accomplish the first of these goals. Although there had been opportunities to explain the purpose behind some of the kindergarten centres, Margie regretted that she and Rose had not been able to discuss the differences between their programs and address whether Rose felt that learning occurred in the kindergarten activity centres. Margie said that she appreciated the positive feedback which Rose had given her, but longed for a chance to talk about educational issues as she had with Bev.

Margie felt that her partnership with Bev had been the kind of ideal relationship which peer coaching had the potential to foster. It was a relationship which encouraged teachers to reflect and to dialogue about educational issues, even beyond the time allocated for peer coaching. Margie said that she would "even like to use the conference time just to discuss things" (p.253). She had intentionally kept the technical part of her conferences short so that there would be more time to explore areas of professional interest. For Margie, two topics close to her heart were the early childhood philosophy and its articulation in the lower elementary grades.

Like Rose, peer coaching had provided Margie with an opportunity to become acquainted with a colleague in a more intimate way than years of teaching in the same school had accomplished:

> We've been friends for a long time. I mean I could drop in for a chat, but I never had a chance to get to know how she teaches and about her philosophy. (p.253)

Peer coaching helped Margie realize just how different she and Rose were in their approaches to children. Margie implied that while each respected the other as teachers, their contrasting methods may have contributed to their hesitancy to explore either the similarities or the differences. She wondered aloud if working with Rose on a joint project in which they had to plan together might not encourage a mutual exploration which this round of peer coaching had failed to generate.

An unexpected result of peer coaching for Margie was the revitalizing effect which it had on her own teaching. Margie offered this as one of the positive features of the project when she shared reflections with other teachers in her group on the day of the project evaluation. Margie explained that because Rose's approach to teaching was very structured and hers, by comparison, was unstructured, it caused her to closely examine her own beliefs. This self-examination resulted in a personal confirmation of her own teaching philosophy that she found "revitalizing" (FN p.131).

The Staff Peer Coaching Evaluation

The staff evaluation of phase one of the peer coaching project at Forest Grove School took place the first week after the staff returned from Christmas holidays. It had been originally scheduled for December but was postponed when several of the teachers became ill. Everyone associated with the project took part in the evaluation. The principal divided the staff into four groups: one composed of people who had provided supervision while teachers were observing their peers, and three groups of participants arranged so that partners were separated. Each group had one person designated to act as a chairperson and to report to the staff. The principal provided a four-point agenda to the groups:

1. Discuss and record the features of peer coaching which teachers found positive.

2. Identify the features which could or should be improved.

3. Suggest ways to improve the issues identified above.

4. If time permits, discuss any other aspects of peer coaching of interest to the group.

After providing the groups with their assignments the principal added some ideas for the staff to consider:

> I have made a suggestion. I have suggested that everyone learn about 'B' type conferencing with Nilah, but that is only a recommendation I have made. The rest of the recommendations will come from you. Please be thinking about the time you spent with your partners; please be thinking about whether or not you want to change your partner. Would you like to go eventually into a 'C' type conference? I need to know all those different things. (p.501)

The Support Group Report

The support group consisted of teachers' aides, the vice-principal, the former TEP consultant, and the school secretary. Although the principal had been part of this group during the project, she did not join them for this discussion, but rather chaired the general staff evaluation. The support group reported that they felt very positive about the program. Although they had no improvements to offer, they wanted to remind the teachers for whom they provided coverage, that the more information they could obtain ahead of time, the better could be their coverage. They also suggested that it was important to have some materials prepared ahead of time for use with the classes. From their perspective, the length of the coverage period was satisfactory.

Positive Features of Peer Coaching

All three groups of peer coaching participants spoke enthusiastically of the project and identified six positive features:

1. All three groups highly valued the opportunity to visit other teachers in their rooms and observe them teach. This was a new experience for most of the staff and they indicated that they benefitted both from seeing the physical environment as well as from the interactions of teacher and students.

2. Those who attended the inservice sessions organized at the school for teachers lacking a TEP background, found these were helpful to them.

3. The groups reported that the peer coaches had reinforced teaching skills learned in the TEP, or raised to consciousness, skills which teachers regularly used but were not aware of:

> It's nice to have somebody point out the good things which make you feel positive. It made you more aware of the good things you were doing. (p.509)

4. Peer coaching had provided an opportunity for teachers to pursue individual goals in addition to the group goals.

5. Peer coaching caused some teachers to examine their own beliefs about teaching through a comparison with others. They found this enlightening and invigorating.

6. The groups all spoke of collegial, practical, and professional benefits of peer coaching. They valued talking with their colleagues, sharing ideas, and coming to a realization that, despite grade or philosophical differences, they had a great deal in common. These quotations illustrate the scope of this category of features:

> We felt our experience of peer coaching was productive because we were able to see other teachers work and get a chance to talk to them afterward as to how they solve problems. We thought it was valuable because we could share ideas. We weren't so concerned about the format of the conference per se, but that we communicated back and forth, sharing ideas. We thought that we even got into a 'B' conference because we were brainstorming and helping one another out with the skills that we were talking about. So we weren't really worried about a 'B' conference per se or an 'A' conference per se. (pp.506-507)

> We felt it gave us the opportunity to talk to each other.... Being in somebody else's classroom and realizing that other teachers cope with the same problems and the same kids as you. (p.509)

> We learned all sorts of things from the situation - new ideas. It was nice that some of us got a chance to work with people at our same level and we were comfortable with that. (p.503)

> We liked the time afterwards when we got to meet, because we got an opportunity to talk to one another with nothing else in the way. (p.507)

Identified Concerns

The teachers who reported for their groups identified four concerns which were widely shared by the staff:

1. The French specialist teachers had not participated in the first phase of the project. The staff wanted to explore ways to get them involved.

2. All groups suggested that the time scheduled for observation failed to coincide with the natural teaching sequence and hence promoted an artificial teaching situation. This was how one group expressed it:

> We certainly agreed that the last half hour on Thursday was the worst time of the day, especially if you wanted to teach a lesson from the beginning to the end, because by the time you get into the classroom it's ten to two and it's the end of the day. It's kind of fabricated that you are starting a lesson at 1:50 on a Thursday afternoon when dismissal is at 2:15. (p.507)

3. The teachers asked that the time scheduled for conferences be kept free of other meetings:

> Devote entire Thursday afternoon time to the conference so that we could talk to the person about what went on that day and plan a little bit for the next time. People in our group felt there just wasn't enough time to do both those things in half an hour; you always knew you had to get to another meeting. (p.508)

4. Another concern was the structure of the conference itself. One group felt that the staff should attempt to clarify whether the objective of the conference was to "improve conferencing skills or to improve teaching and sharing" (p.511). They felt that if this were done then it would have implications for the agenda discussed by the peers. This group favoured an informal approach to conferences:

2

> We felt very strongly about the structure of the conference - it's far too canned. We felt very uncomfortable with that. We still look for the same points but engage in a more informal discussion. Most of us mentioned that we slipped out of the formal structure of the conference and slipped into sharing - just informally. If we forgot about the structure of the conference, those were the most valuable parts of the conference. (p.510)

This group felt that too much writing during the observation period caused them to miss the overall sense of what was happening. Eye contact, facial expressions, and teacher's signals were often lost if the observer concentrated on verbal exchanges. They suggested that "writing key points rather than a long formal thing" (p.511) might save the flavour of the lesson while still providing points for discussion.

Decisions for Phase Two

Once all of the groups had presented their reports, the staff formed a circle and began to explore in detail the issues which had been identified. The principal led off the discussion by offering an overview of the project which suggested that teachers had made certain assumptions which had given rise to some of their concerns. She also identified several critical features which participants must address for peer coaching to meet its objectives:

> The way I see it, some of the people really enjoyed the structure; others didn't like the structure. The diversity! One thing that came up that was the same for all of you is that you all had something in place that you thought [peer coaching] was or wasn't. It seems to me that the most important

> thing that took place was between the two of you. I've done a lot of thinking about this myself, and it would seem to me that when you and your partner are working, you should sit down before you ever begin, and decide what it is that you want, and this is how we are going to work together. The shell [format], remember, was only a shell that you could or couldn't use. So I think some of you were feeling constraints that really weren't there. The suggestions of the topics have only been a guideline. Don't feel constrained; remember the objective in the beginning was to get into each other's rooms [and] to feel comfortable. That's what you've done and I'm very pleased to see that indeed, that's what has happened. (pp.512-513)

Having recalled the original guidelines, the principal encouraged the staff to explore suggestions which addressed the identified concerns. There was no discussion concerning the need to involve the specialists in the project. Everyone agreed that this was desirable and the principal offered to help the specialists make the necessary arrangements. There also appeared to be a concensus concerning the most appropriate time for peers to observe one another. The teachers agreed that the best time would be one arranged by the participants. However, this raised the question of coordination with the support team and the question of whether the observation and conference should occur on the same day. The former TEP consultant shared her experience that it was preferable to observe and conference on the same day. She suggested that if teachers:

> ...observe one day and have a day of teaching in between, thinking back to that specific lesson at

> that specific time becomes difficult and your conference loses its meaning. (p.518)

After discussing several possibilities, the staff reached a concensus that teachers should work as triads consisting of the peer coaching partners and the support person who regularly covered for them. Each triad should meet to choose an appropriate observation time for every peer coaching period. They agreed that, where possible, the observation should occur the same day as the conference. Since Forest Grove had received permission for early dismissal on Thursdays, the conferences would normally continue to take place after school on that day.

A related issue concerned the teachers' request that when conferences were scheduled, the afternoon should be kept free of other staff commitments. The principal agreed with the request but suggested that there might have to be a trade-off in time to permit the staff to meet all commitments. The staff seemed to accept the principle that in order to insure that peer coaching conferences would be uninterrupted, they must be prepared to have fewer meetings, whether they were peer coaching sessions, or other kinds of staff meetings.

The staff also discussed whether there was a need to clarify the objectives of peer coaching so that all teachers would be comfortable with the conference format. The principal said she felt it was more important for each team to negotiate a mutually acceptable format than to define a single formula for conferencing which everyone must follow. She seemed to imply that the form of the interaction was less important than the process itself. The principal also emphasized the significance of establishing reciprocity when setting peer coaching objectives:

> Just remember that you are in there to provide for the needs of the other person as well for your own needs. I think that is where the blend has to be. You really have to know what it is that your partner wants to achieve because I think that you have to help your partner achieve what it is that they want to do, just as much as they have to help you achieve what it is that you want to do. (pp.518-519)

Although the teacher groups had not expressed a concern about the composition of peer coaching teams, the principal raised this as an issue on which she would appreciate staff suggestions. She said that she sometimes found it difficult to "get the combinations together so that [they] will feel happy and successful" (p.519). In the first phase, although teachers were free to choose their own partner, many looked to the principal to act as a facilitator for this process.

When the principal raised this issue, several teachers immediately said that they did not want to change partners; others expressed an interest in teaming with someone new. Alluding to the different needs of individuals and the very personal nature of selecting a peer coaching partner, the principal suggested this plan of action:

> Would it be acceptable to talk to each person individually, because it is a very personal thing, and find out from you if you would like to change or not and who you would like to be partnered up with? (p.520)

Perhaps anticipating that some teachers might misunderstand why their peer coaching partner would want a change, the principal pointed out the benefits of changing partners and encouraged her teachers to see it as an affirmation of the program rather than as a rejection of a partner:

> I would ask that if your partner does want to change, that you would understand why your partner wants to change. It's not because they don't want to work with you, it's because they enjoyed working with you and they would like other experiences. (p.521)

The teachers seemed to appreciate these remarks and accepted the suggestion with this slight modification: those who want to change would speak to the principal and suggest the names of people with whom they would like to peer coach. The principal would then negotiate on their behalf and arrange suitable matches.

When the meeting ended, only one item remained unresolved - the principal's suggestion that everyone learn how to conduct a 'B' conference. The former TEP consultant briefly described both 'B' and 'C' conferences. She pointed out that these formats were quite similar to those some of the teams were already using. Although several teachers expressed interest in learning more about them, there seemed to be a general reluctance to make a further time commitment to inservice education at this point in the project. The option would be there for future consideration.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to describe how the various elements of this study - Rose, Mary, Margie, the Forest Grove staff, and their background of experience in the Teacher Effectiveness Program - combined in the peer coaching project at Forest Grove.

The project began in early September when the principal and teachers discussed general guidelines, selected partners, and scheduled sessions. Initially, the focus of the study was Rose and Mary. After a goal-setting session and one peer coaching session, Rose and Mary took new partners. Hence, the chapter describes the various peer coaching arrangements made by Rose and Mary, Mary and Bev, and then by Rose and her new partner, Margie.

Initial sessions involved forms of negotiation as the teachers offered their own definitions of the situation and attempted to interpret their partners'. When peers sensed incongruency between their definitions and interpretations, dilemmas emerged. These dilemmas resulted in conscious acts by individuals. Some of these actions were successful; some were blocked; others led to various forms of accommodation and mutual adaptation. The emotional responses of Rose, Mary, and Margie revealed that they found some aspects of peer coaching satisfying, while other parts caused anxiety and frustration.

The chapter concludes with a description of the staff evaluation of the project. This revealed that the staff valued the opportunity to observe their peers teaching and to discuss educational issues. They suggested improvements for scheduling observations and for increasing the length of coaching sessions. The structure of conferences concerned many teachers, but this was left for coaching pairs to resolve.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERPRETATION OF DATA AND GENERATION OF HYPOTHESES

This study was designed as an exploration of the meanings which experienced teachers associate with peer coaching. The focus of the study has been three elementary teachers with background experiences in their district's Teacher Effectiveness Program. They, along with most of the teachers at Forest Grove Elementary School, participated in the first phase of a peer coaching project which began in September, 1987 and ended in January, 1988. During this period there was an initial goal-setting session and a final evaluation session. In between these sessions, the teachers participated in five peer coaching sessions. The data upon which descriptions and interpretations are based were derived from this period.

The researcher employed a framework of symbolic interactionism to identify contextual elements and to describe how they interacted. Chapter 4 contains a description of the contextual elements; chapter 5 describes their interaction. The purpose of this chapter is to interpret the data described in those two chapters. This interpretation attempts to provide answers to the central question of this study: What is the meaning of peer coaching for experienced teachers? From this interpretation, several hypotheses have been generated.

Interpretation of the Lines of Action

The meaning which each of the key participants took from their peer coaching experience, if examined from a symbolic interactionist perspective, takes on many facets. Mahé (1984) has expressed this particularly well:

> From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the way human beings act toward things and significant others in situations, depends on how, in the self-interaction process, they define and interpret a variety of external and internal elements which constitute their situation. When organizing prospective lines of action in the self-interactive process, individuals may note, designate to themselves, judge, analyze, and evaluate such things or elements as : their perceptions of the situation; the expectations and demands of others; objects around them; their recollections; the presence and actions of others; their goals, wants, feelings, emotions; and their images of prospective lines of conduct combined with their judgments of the possibilities of the situation. (pp.257-258)

The exploration of the meaning of peer coaching which follows attempts to incorporate both the internal and external elements and reflect the definitions and interpretations which both the key informants and the Forest Grove staff brought together in the joint action seen as peer coaching. A peer coaching model has been developed in an attempt to integrate and suggest relationships among the various elements of peer coaching which appeared to have meaning for the teachers in this study. The first section examines the sense of stages which the teachers in peer coaching identified; the second explains the model; the third explores the two dimensions of peer coaching; the fourth section looks at each of the five components of peer coaching; the fifth, and final section, identifies contextual factors in the project itself.

A Sense of Stages

The data strongly suggests that participants in the peer coaching project had a sense that they were involved in a staged process. Their sense of stages revealed itself in three ways:

1. The teachers believed that stages of coaching existed.
2. They felt that individuals had to go through emotional stages and perhaps even cycles.
3. The teachers sensed that peer coaching at Forest Grove was an evolving phenomenon and that the period of data collection represented only the first stage.

At some point during the period of research each of the key informants questioned whether their involvement in the project actually qualified as coaching. Mary made a distinction between feedback and coaching:

> I would say that at this stage we are actually providing feedback. Bev has asked me a couple of times, 'How would you do that?' So she has provided the opportunity for some coaching. To me, coaching

> is where you tell people what they are doing well and where they could improve. (p.365)

Rose suggested that at this point in the project, "conferencing" (p.100) was a more suitable identifier than coaching, for what she was doing with Margie. Margie, herself, said that coaching had been "mis-labelled" because coaching had a "different connotation" from their present involvement (p.406). Her objection to the name seemed to centre on the extent of interaction or sharing which occurred between the peers:

> I would think that in the end it would have to be a 'B' or 'C' conference for sure to become [coaching]. (p.407)

Rose also identified coaching with sharing. She foresaw more of this in the future when she expected to be comfortable enough with her 'A' conference format to break away from a dependence on it:

> I like the conferencing format...but after I become more confident with conferencing and the format itself becomes a part of me, I will have the liberty to veer off and if the conference is heading in a different direction, I would be comfortable allowing it to do that, whereas right now, I am not. I am still very dependent on the format that is in front of me. (p.84)

Margie felt that her experiences in team teaching at Forest Grove might qualify as peer coaching because she and the librarian had jointly planned and criticized the lessons. They had sought a mutual goal and the feedback and consequent discussions had resulted in changed practices.

The principal of Forest Grove took a different viewpoint on what constituted coaching. She maintained that what Rose, Mary, and Margie described as 'conferencing' or 'feedback' was an early stage of peer coaching. While this may amount to a difference in semantics it does seem to indicate that both the principal and her teachers sensed stages in this social interactive process and that different terms might be used to identify the stages.

The literature supports the idea of stages of coaching. Garmston (1987) identified three kinds of coaching: technical, collegial, and challenge. He describes technical coaching as helping "teachers transfer training to classroom practice, while deepening collegiality, increasing professional dialogue, and giving teachers a shared vocabulary to talk about their craft" (p.18). He felt that the fact that observers were looking for a pre-determined skill gave them an evaluative role which put some teachers on the defensive. According to Garmston, collegial coaching has as its goal "to refine teaching practices, deepen collegiality, increase professional dialogue, and to help teachers think more deeply about their work" (p.20). Both technical and collegial coaching mostly involve pairs of teachers, but the latter concentrates on areas the observed teacher wishes to learn more about.

Although the parallels may not be exact, it would seem that Garmston's collegial coaching closely corresponds to 'C' conferences. Challenge coaching, the most advanced form of coaching identified by Garmston, evolves from technical and collegial forms. It generally involves a small group of teachers who identify a problem which interests them. They plan how to study the problem, collect data while taking turns observing one another, then reflect upon and discuss what has been learned, much as action researchers would do. Grundy (1987) who has written a text on action research, also refers to three stages of action research which she calls technical, practical, and emancipatory.

If one were to categorize the Forest Grove model in terms of Garmston's kinds of coaching, it would appear to be a combination of technical and collegial coaching. The principal's guidelines seemed to point toward a collegial kind of coaching, but the teachers' background in the TE Program may have inclined them to use a technical form, although the majority seemed to express an orientation for a collegial form.

Several other authors have written articles which provide other perspectives on the sense of stages indicated by the Forest Grove teachers. Showers (1985) and Rogers (1987) described coaching as a cyclical process which occurs in stages and moves from a simple to a more complex form. The initial stage is intended to implement new skills through observation and feedback; the more advanced stages involve a mutual examination of appropriate teaching strategies. This kind of staged progression can be sensed in the Forest Grove project. The principal's comments and those of the former TEP consultant indicated that they felt it was important to keep this first phase uncomplicated so that the participants would be comfortable with the process and with one another.

Hall's work (1975, 1976) on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) provides another way of identifying the developmental stages of an innovation. From their research, Hall et al (1975) developed a 'levels of use' chart. This chart implies that when individuals are confronted by an innovation, they exhibit behaviours which relate to one of seven stages ranging from the lowest level, non-use, to the highest level, renewal. Hall says that several cycles of the innovation are needed before significant progress can be expected; without special intervention such as by a peer or a facilitator, 30% to 40% will stabilize at a mid-range level, which he terms "routine". Hall describes this routine level of use of an innovation as stabilized, with few, if any changes being made in ongoing use. Little preparation or thought is given to the use of the innovation or its consequences at this stage (Hall, 1975).

A second concept which Hall (1976) identifies is the stages of concern. People who are involved in innovations progress through these stages. He observed that these stages closely resembled those described by Fuller (1969) in pre-service teachers. Hall said that when individuals first become involved with an innovation, their concerns are self-oriented. As they get used to the changes they begin to focus more on the task itself - the logistics and management. Only after these two stages have been successfully mastered does the individual focus on the effects of the innovation and other people who are involved.

Indications that the teachers involved in peer coaching were experiencing Hall's stages of concern can be seen in the data. These two quotations from interviews with Rose in November and December seem to imply that she sensed a personal movement away from concerns about self toward concerns about others:

> Right now we are struggling, searching, reaching out; we're trying to find out what do I really want out of this situation. Maybe I'm changing my mind as to what I really want out of this. I think this is where this whole emotional thing comes in. I think that down the road a year or two the whole emotional part of it would be a minimal part, whereas now, I think that probably it is still right there. (p.416)

> ...the whole emotional thing, the trauma of being observed by a peer is over and I realize that we have a lot to share with one another. We're not coming together to look at one another critically.

> We need to get to that point where it is a sharing time. (p.111)

Hall (1976) observed that educators would like to think that they always function at the impact concern level but such is not the case:

> It is a basic finding of the CBAM research that almost everyone when first confronted with a 'new' innovation, will have relatively intense personal and informational concerns. It is important to recognize that self-concerns are a fully legitimate part of change. Rather than indicting people for having self-concerns, the role of adoption agents and policy/decision-makers should be to aid in the resolution of self-concerns and to facilitate movement toward task- and impact-related concerns. (p.23)

In this section, the data indicate that one important meaning which the participants took from their experience of peer coaching was that it involved stages. These stages were evidenced in terms of a projected time frame for the project; this study investigated the first step or phase one. The teachers anticipated that over a period of time their concerns and their relationships with others would evolve through stages. The teachers also sensed that there were different forms of coaching which some authors have described as simple to complex but which might also be thought of as evolving from self-centred toward task-centred and other-centred. The evolutionary nature of peer coaching became evident to the teachers even during the four months of data collection. They seemed to appreciate the staff evaluation day as a time to reflect on phase one and to plan for phase two of the project.

A Model of Peer Coaching

Three months into the study, definite themes began to emerge from the data and from ongoing contacts with the key informants and the Forest Grove staff. The themes which first appeared involved emotional reactions to peer coaching, the technical emphasis of conferencing, and a variety of factors related to the organization of the project. With the initial identification of themes, the researcher began to explore relationships between these elements. As additional themes emerged, they were integrated with previous ones and relationships established. The elements of the peer coaching model which have resulted from this exploration represent an outline of the answer to the primary question for this research study: what is the meaning of peer coaching for experienced teachers? In that sense, the model is a metaphor framing the answer. Although this model does not appear to address the sense of stages which the teachers identified, the sense of stages is captured in the meaning of the dimensions. With that exception, the model does identify all the other elements which have been differentiated as dimensions, components, and factors. These elements seemed to constitute the meaning of peer coaching for Rose, Mary, Margie, and the other teachers at Forest Grove School.

The use of the terms components, dimensions, and factors is somewhat arbitrary. There is a sense in which they all represent what might be termed elements of peer coaching - parts of its meaning. Yet, the choice of these three terms is deliberate because separate terms emphasize similarities within each category and bring nuances of meaning which imply how each category relates differently to the overall experience of peer coaching.

The term dimension was selected because of the association this term has with the description of elements which vary in size or shape. It is this sense of change and evolution which its use is intended to imply in this study. For example, the emotional dimension associated with peer coaching may range from satisfaction to frustration.

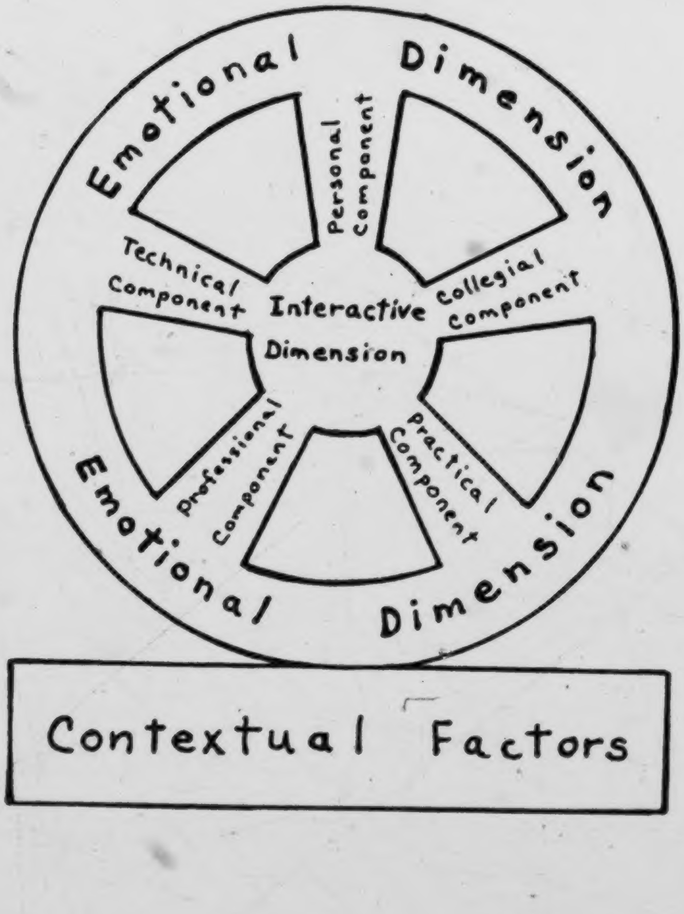
Component was chosen to convey the sense that it represented a significant or constituent element of something more complex. For example, the technical component is one of five identified components of peer coaching.

The term factor indicates an element which contributes to a result. For example, one contextual factor which may have been related to the goals set by partners was previous inservice education on teacher effectiveness.

The peer coaching model incorporates two dimensions, five components, and a set of factors. The dimensions are termed interactive and emotional; the components are called technical, collegial, practical, personal, and professional; the set of factors is referred to as contextual. The model is shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

A Peer Coaching Model


Emotional Dimension
Personal Component
Technical Component
Interactive Dimension
Collegial Component
Professional Component
Practical Component
Emotional Dimension
Contextual Factors

The design of the model emerged after trying various ways to relate all the elements of peer coaching in a way which revealed their inter-relationships. The selection of a wheel with a hub, spokes, and a rim which rolls on a base, shows the relationship of dimensions to components, and both to contextual factors.

The emotional and interactive dimensions, by their nature and by their placement in the figure, relate to each of the components. The central focus of peer coaching is interaction between individuals. It may take many forms and it is likely to change and evolve. This explains why the interactive dimension forms the hub of the peer coaching wheel.

Moving outward from the hub, the five components constitute five major distinguishable emphases which the teachers associated with peer coaching. The terms technical, collegial, practical, personal, and professional also relate to the teachers' goals for peer coaching, their forms of interactions, and the outcomes which they identified.

The emotional dimension implies that teachers' responses to peer coaching varied through a spectrum of emotional reactions which resulted as interacting peers experienced one or more of the five components of peer coaching. For example, a teacher might express satisfaction as a result of interacting with a peer in a mode which permitted the growth of technical skills, a sense of collegiality, and an exchange of practical information.

As the peer relationship evolved, certain factors in the project context affected its evolution and had particular meanings for the participants. Metaphorically, the peer coaching wheel rolls on a base composed of a set of contextual factors which may either enhance or impede its progress, but which definitely contribute to the overall experience from which teachers developed their meaning of peer coaching.

Although Figure 2 represents each of the five components [spokes] as being of equal size, applying the sense of stages concept to the model can affect particular elements in the model. Teachers who were experiencing the beginning stages of peer coaching, as were the Forest Grove teachers, might tend to emphasize the technical and collegial components, while de-emphasizing the professional, practical, and personal ones. This stage could be illustrated with the model by modifying the size of the spokes to indicate particular emphases. Although the purpose of the model is to identify the elements of meaning drawn from the data, the model could be modified to more closely represent the meaning given to peer coaching by individuals, by coaching peers, or even by groups of teachers at particular stages in their peer coaching development.

It is important to remember that the peer coaching model is only an outline, a signpost, an organizing framework which can be enriched by the qualitative data which emerges from a naturalistic study such as this. Let us now examine each of the elements of the peer coaching model and look for evidence of its existence as it was revealed in the case studies of Rose, Margie, and Mary.

The Dimensions of Peer Coaching

The peer coaching data seemed to reveal several elements which some teachers experienced some of the time. However, two elements of peer coaching which seemed to be present in all aspects were an interactive element and an emotional element. In order to capture the pervasive and changing characteristics of these elements, the term dimension replaced the word element. Hence, the interactive dimension and the emotional dimension were the labels attached to two peer coaching elements which constituted part of the meaning that Rose, Mary, and Margie gave to peer coaching.

The Interactive Dimension

The interactive dimension is at the heart of peer coaching. Related terms would be interpersonal relationships, interpersonal communications, the human dimension. Ironically, the interactive dimension is so central and so pervasive that it remained invisible to the researcher until the latter stages of the project. Communication, accommodation, and interpersonal relations represented sub-topics which did not initially appear to fit in the peer coaching model. Suddenly it became clear that the term peer interaction, which had been casually put in the hub of the model, represented a major element of peer coaching which subsumed these leftover categories.

The conceptual framework emphasizes the prime importance of the interactive dimension in social interaction. Its concepts have proven helpful in examining the interactive dimension of peer coaching. Meltzer (1972), in discussing Mead's work, spoke of how people defined themselves to others, and interpreted others' definitions of who they were. These social exchanges of a symbolic nature form our initial ideas of who we are, who others are, and how we are going to act together. Symbolic interactionist ideas also suggest that people make indications to themselves as to who they are and what they want. These self-indications, which are like mental dialogues, constituted Mead's concept of mind. As people read the definitions or signals sent by others, they also internalized them. Mead referred to the 'me' as the internalized norms of significant others, whereas one's own inclinations were represented by the 'I'. Together, the 'I' and the 'me' constituted the 'self' where internal dialogues occurred. Whenever the self detects dissonance between the definitions of the self and the interpreted definitions of significant others, then a tension is created. This tension may lead to new definitions being sent, or to reinterpretations of the other. The key point is that prior to an act, conscious decisions must be made by the interacting persons. Acts, when taken, may be accommodating, incomplete, blocked, or automatic. Whatever the result, acts are the end result of an interactive process which involves both external and internal disclosures, interpretations, and conscious decisions.

Hunt (1978) seemed to be adapting symbolic interactionist ideas to teacher inservice when he spoke of his persons-in-relation model. He described the need for persons who were interacting to read and flex. 'Reading' involved discovering the identity [who] of the other, their intentionality [wants], their knowledge [know], and their competence [know-how]. Only after this had been accomplished could teachers 'flex' to achieve mutual action which gave priority to the context and had the potential for enhancing a teacher's development.

In the peer coaching project, each of the teachers began with certain assumptions about who they were and who their partner was. This was described in the 'elements' section of chapter 4. In their initial peer coaching session, Rose and Mary discussed their goals and laid tentative plans. In so doing, each began to define who she was and what she wanted in the project. Although each seemed to share an interest in learning conferencing skills to help student teachers, this was a higher priority for Rose. Mary, on the other hand, indicated that interpersonal relationships and sharing ideas was her highest priority. The extent to which they might have accommodated one another's goals will never be known because of Mary's decision to change partners. From Mary's perspective, this new relationship accommodated both her needs and those of her partner. Consequently her emotional reaction to this part of peer coaching was positive. Reflecting on her brief period with Mary, Rose indicated that she had accurately interpreted messages that Mary had either consciously or unconsciously sent:

> I guess I sensed that Mary was uptight. I guess I really truly felt that. It was evident and it was there. However, I know that I was also uptight and so was everyone else on staff. (p.421)

When Rose and Margie became peer coaching partners, they had to repeat the process of defining and interpreting themselves to one another. This occurred during their first and second peer coaching sessions in October. In the first session they defined their peer coaching goals; in the second they negotiated how they would interact with respect to the topics discussed, the conference format, and the presentation of the teaching situation for the observer/coach.

Rose's primary goal in her partnership with Margie remained, as before, to improve her conferencing skills. Margie's goal in her new partnership was to learn how Rose taught, and to share ideas about her kindergarten program. Rose favoured a structured conference based on effective teaching skills, while Margie favoured an informal discussion of ideas related to their programs. Each agreed to honour the other's method of operation; they also seemed to indicate a willingness to move away from an 'A' conference to a 'B' conference at some future time. Because the negotiations did not identify mutual goals or methods of interacting, the result was that whoever was observing and coaching tended to structure the conference according to her preference. In addition, each teacher's individual goals for peer coaching were incongruent with her peer's teaching and conference styles. While both Rose and Margie felt they made some progress toward their goals, they also felt some disappointment because they could not find a form of accommodation which would mutually serve their different goals and different coaching styles. Their definitions were different. They each interpreted the other correctly, but failed to find a way of mutual accommodation.

The importance of developing mutual goals and ways of interacting was a recurring theme in the data. In a discussion of what constituted coaching, Margie expressed her belief that "peer coaching can only take place if two people are working together for a common goal" (p.414). Rose agreed, but felt that an extended period of time was essential to develop such a relationship. Rose implied that at this stage of peer coaching she was not yet comfortable enough to move away from an 'A' conference format:

> I think it takes an awful lot of bonding to be comfortable, to be able to throw things back and forth and say you might have tried this or that. (p.407)

Other teachers certainly shared Rose's hesitation to move too far too fast. In the evaluation meeting, one of the teachers who lacked any TEP experience, but who had attended the school inservice sessions, spoke of her dependence on a conference outline:

> I'm not entirely sure what a conference is; like I know what a conference is and I get all the points covered because I have it all written down in front of me, but it takes a lot of practice to do a good conference. (pp.505-506)

This teacher expressed her interest in a support group which would provide more opportunities for practice. This was echoed by another teacher who spoke for his evaluation group and said they "felt they have insufficient skills to move ahead to a 'B' conference, but there is no problem talking about it and learning about it" (p.505). Another teacher, a TEP graduate, said that for her, feeling comfortable with one's partner was a higher priority than a background in teacher effectiveness:

> I would rather feel that I am with someone that I am comfortable with. I don't care at what point in teacher effectiveness they are. For me, that has no bearing. (p.505)

This study did not collect data regarding the different reactions of novice teachers, or experienced teachers without a background in teacher effectiveness. The focus was on experienced teachers with a TEP background. In that group, the data suggest there were individual differences regarding the teachers' readiness to adopt various conference styles. It does appear that when peer partners, no matter what their background, shared mutual goals and established reciprocal forms of interaction, their feelings about peer coaching tended to be positive. The principal emphasized this theme of mutuality in her final observations at the evaluation meeting:

> Remember the objective in the beginning was to get into each others' rooms and to feel comfortable. (p.513)
>
> It seems to me that the most important thing that took place [in peer coaching] was between the two of you. (p.512)
>
> Just remember that you are in there to provide for the needs of the other person as well as for your own needs. (pp.518-519)

The data suggest that all three of the key teachers in the study sensed that part of the meaning which each gave to peer coaching depended on their form of peer interaction. The interaction experienced in peer coaching provided an opportunity for teachers to get acquainted on more than a superficial level. As Margie said:

> I certainly feel that everyone of us has a personal aspect to this program - things that we are practically gaining from it outside of the structure. (p.403)

Rose spoke of a "feeling of goodwill" (p.403) which occurs when colleagues interact. She saw the potential for a deeper relationship with Mary than they had previously enjoyed:

> There's a special thing that happens between two people and I could see this happen between Mary and me. We had barely started and I felt a good relationship developing between us already. I did not know Mary very well before we started peer coaching. (p.404)

Margie hinted at the public and private faces which teachers present to their students, the public, and to one another. Peer coaching, she implied, brought a new dimension to the usual interaction among peers:

> I think teachers can be their real self in front of children and to some degree, I don't feel I change much when parents come in. But you sort of think, well, your peers - there's something that's just a little bit different there. (p.405)

The "something a little bit different" that Margie referred to might be the hesitation which teachers feel to open their classroom to others. Lortie (1975) described a pattern of what he termed "cellular growth" in schools and suggested that teachers' individualism and commitment to their students was a higher priority than relationships with other adults. Yet, he felt that teachers see adult-to-adult relationships as an attempt to balance the tensions between independence and dependence, autonomy and participation, control and subordination (ibid pp.186-187).

Rose astutely recognized that peer interaction invariably leads to emotional responses:

> If you wanted to call it anything, I guess it's a bonding that happens between two people;... having someone come in and observe you - means, you really are baring your soul. You're exposing the real you; what you really are. That's the emotional part. (p.405)

Emotions can run the gamut from feelings which cause pleasure and satisfaction to those which cause stress and anxiety. In the overall peer coaching project, it appeared that those who developed mutual forms of interacting tended to experience more positive feelings about their relationship. Where there was mutual accommodation the peers felt more comfortable than where they failed to accommodate one another.

Little (1985) studied teachers who acted as advisors to other teachers in Marin County, California. She identified six principles that seemed to build successful peer relationships. Kent (1987) refers to the first three as technical skills, while the final three are called social principles. In brief, these principles of peer interaction were: develop a common language; focus on one or two key issues or problems; keep a record of classroom interaction by selecting or inventing a method of observation that works; engage in lively interaction; be predictable; develop a model of reciprocity to preserve dignity and show trust and respect.

Blumberg (1980) spoke of the "private cold war" which occurs between supervisors and teachers and pointed to some of the qualities necessary to build successful interpersonal relationships. Three which seem to relate to interpersonal skills were: open, trusting communication; reciprocal feedback; and self-disclosure.

Grimmett et al (1985) studied peer coaching in British Columbia over a two-year period. He reported that most of the teachers and principals in the study at various times employed 'A', 'B', 'C', and 'D' style conferences. The largest group, seven out of eighteen or 38%, regarded 'C' as the most professionally rewarding type for the following reasons:

> 1. It allowed for sharing ideas and learning from other colleagues in a non-threatening way.
> 2. It provided alternatives and suggestions for improvement.
> 3. It called for an analysis of skills and lessons.
>
> (Appendix A, p.42)

When asked which conference type they found the least professionally rewarding, two-thirds of a group of eighteen indicated the 'A' conference because (1) "it provided no suggestions that could help one grow and (2) it did not force lesson or self-analysis" (Appendix A,p.43).

In view of these findings, the Forest Grove teachers' hesitancy to begin using 'B' conferences, as suggested by their principal, or to participate in inservice sessions on 'B' and 'C' conferences, may have been an inhibiting factor in realizing their generally collegial goals. On the other hand, Grimmett et al, noted the tendency of participants in that study to accelerate the peer coaching process and to become formalized and contrived. Although the 'B', 'C' and 'D' forms of conferencing are designed to encourage two-way conversations, it is also possible that by slowing down their evolution, the Forest Grove teachers will mutually adopt forms of interaction which will be better suited to their needs.

In conclusion, the literature implies not only that the interactive dimension is a crucial element of peer coaching but also that forms of interaction which encourage mutual and reciprocal relationships enhance the chances of it being successful. Both Margie's and Mary's experiences with Bev, and by negative inference their experiences with Rose, support this conclusion.

The Emotional Dimension

The data strongly indicate that there was an emotional dimension through which the teachers expressed the meanings which they associated with the various elements of peer coaching. The participants had feelings about interacting, about the five components, and about the factors in the school environment which affected them. Teachers' emotions varied from individual to individual and from the beginning of the project to the end. Whenever a component or a factor could be identified, there was almost invariably an emotional modifier which expressed the meaning which a teacher gave to that particular element. For example, a teacher might speak only of the anxiety experienced when conferencing a peer at the onset of the project. After three months, the same teacher might speak of lessened anxiety and increased satisfaction associated with the same interaction.

In Chapter 5, the descriptions of the peer coaching interactions between Rose and Mary, Mary and Bev, and Rose and Margie produced evidence of the various emotions experienced by the three key informants. In her journal prior to the first peer coaching session, Mary described her stage as one of "self-consciousness". She wrote of her "stressful" feelings about being observed (FN p.51) and having to conference Rose. Later she wrote of her "comfortable" (p.347) relationship with Bev. Rose also described her feeling of "insecurity" (FN p.57) prior to the first conference, then her "surprise" (FN p.60) and satisfaction that it went so well. Margie, on the other hand, indicated that she was quite relaxed about conferencing and being observed, but she expressed strong feelings about the format (p.227) of the conference.

Each of these teachers experienced some form of dilemma in the course of her peer coaching experience. Considerable emotion was associated with Mary's decision to ask for a different partner, with Rose's decision not to change her conferencing style, and with Margie's decision not to change her teaching style. Yet, once decisions were made and peer coaching patterns established, other emotions emerged as the interaction between peers assumed different forms and stages. Rose spoke of the "bonding" (p.405) that occurred between peers once they got better acquainted, but she indicated that she needed a period of time before she could feel comfortable with someone in a new situation. She wondered if "the pressure and the tension and the stress" (p.423) would re-occur after Christmas if she changed partners once again. Mary found her new partnership with Bev was "very comfortable" (p.347) and consequently hoped that she would be able to keep her partner in phase two of the project. Margie indicated that she was quite willing to stay in partnership with Rose if they could begin using a 'B' conference format which would bring increased satisfaction to being conferenced. Rose, too, showed that as she moved from one stage of peer coaching to another, both her needs and emotions changed. While she found an 'A' conference initially satisfying, after three months, she was no longer satisfied with the "pat on the back" (p.106) that the positive feedback format provided.

The experience of Rose and the other teachers at Forest Grove appears to support Hall's (1976) concept of stages of concern about an innovation. He posits seven stages:

	Sample expression of concern
0 Awareness	- I don't know anything about the innovation.
1 Informational	- I would like to know more about it.
2 Personal	- How will it affect me?
3 Management	- I seem to be spending all my time getting material ready.
4 Consequence	- How is my use affecting kids?
5 Collaboration	- I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.
6 Refocusing	- I would like to know of something which would work even better.

(Hall; 1976, p.22)

Because of their TEP backgrounds, all three teachers probably began at the personal level and then moved to other levels over the course of the project. The data seem to suggest that a teacher could experience two levels simultaneously, particularly the personal [which implies a strong emotional dimension] and another level. Also, different teachers seemed to experience the various levels differently. Rose, for example, seemed to express more interest in management than Mary or Margie. Both Mary and Margie expressed interest in collaboration at the early stages of the program. Margie, in particular, might be seen as expressing a strong interest in refocusing near the beginning of the project.

The general anxiety initially experienced by Rose, Mary, and the others on the Forest Grove Staff seems to be generally acknowledged in the literature. Joyce (Brandt, 1987) suggests that coaching is initially scary to teachers because they do not know how they compare with others on staff and they are afraid of the comparison. He describes an emotional cycle of fear, followed by elation, followed by heightened attention which he has observed in teachers involved in peer coaching. He maintains that demonstration and practice in coaching are important to easing the initial impact of peer coaching:

> I'd rather do it that way than just pair teachers and say without training, 'Now coach'. (p.13)

Withall and Wood (1979) also addressed the difficulty of taking the threat out of classroom observation and feedback. Although they spoke from a perspective of clinical supervision, their comments also seem appropriate to peer coaching. They pointed out that the initial anxiety which teachers experience when being observed will be allayed with experience. Also, this process can be enhanced by training in observational skills and by insuring that the process is controlled by the person being observed. In peer coaching involving Margie and Rose, the process appeared to be controlled by the observer.

Grimmett et al (1985, p.60) noted that both teachers and principals in their British Columbia study indicated that for peer coaching to be beneficial, "extreme care in the choice of colleagues was required". Furthermore, the researchers discovered that because peer coaching required such close professional relationships, in schools where there was staff conflict or a shortage of human resources, they had difficulty even starting the project. These researchers also found that although some teachers felt initially threatened by the project, the principal appeared to play a critical role in helping teachers to "overcome or succumb to these fears" (ibid). Comparable data were collected at Forest Grove where the principal set the initial tone, intervened to assist individuals who were anxious about some aspect of peer coaching, arranged for the evaluation of phase one, and guided the staff to decisions regarding phase two.

By the time of the peer coaching evaluation, the Forest Grove staff seemed less concerned about the emotional impact of peer coaching and more concerned about practical considerations which would allow them to fulfil the agendas developed by the coaching pairs. The staff projected an overall impression that what they had done was both valuable and supportive of their personal and collegial goals. The staff readily identified the positive aspects of the program and was quick to make proposals which would improve phase two. The implications were that new partnerships and new innovations might temporarily cause periods of increased anxiety, but that the long-range goal was worth whatever short-term discomfort might occur. One of the teachers, speaking of the specific changes to peer coaching which the staff proposed for phase two, used a memorable metaphor to emphasize his belief that peer coaching, seen in the total perspective of education at Forest Grove, was worth waiting for:

> [Peer coaching] is something we really like, but it is not such a big deal that it has to control everything. It's like whipped cream on strawberries - it makes things even better. (p. 445)

The Components of Peer Coaching

Joyce and Showers (1980) initially used the term coaching to refer to guided feedback provided after observing a teacher use a specific skill in a classroom situation. Its purpose is to improve the chances of correctly and consistently applying a newly-learned skill in the classroom. Coaching was seen as a critical final stage in the inservice process. In 1982, these authors outlined a more elaborate role for coaching in the school setting. They identified five functions of coaching: providing technical feedback, analyzing the application of skills, providing companionship, helping the teacher with students' adaptation to new skills, and providing support and encouragement to a peer. In 1985, Showers described coaching as a process with two sets of emphases. The first set of coaching skills aids in the transfer of new teaching skills and strategies to the classroom. The second set of more complex coaching skills concentrates on collaborative problem-solving activities among teachers. Garmston (1987) makes somewhat similar distinctions but identifies three forms of coaching: technical, collegial, and challenge. All these descriptions of coaching are informative and useful, but they do not indicate the meaning which teachers give to their experience of peer coaching. That is the purpose of this research.

So far we have examined the interactive and emotional dimensions which had particular meaning for Rose, Mary, Margie, and other teachers at Forest Grove School. In addition to these dimensions, five components, subsequently named technical, collegial, practical, personal, and professional, emerged from the data as having meaning for the teachers. There was not always a clear distinction among the components, yet, at various times with different teachers, each component seemed to constitute a special, differentiated meaning of peer coaching. Let us examine each of these components in turn.

The Technical Component

As the name suggests, the technical component of peer coaching involves the use of a technical language to identify and employ specific skills according to pre-determined principles or guidelines. Teacher effectiveness is based on this premise, and coaching techniques have been developed to increase the implementation of its principles. Since teacher effectiveness training was in the background of the principal and the majority of the Forest Grove staff, it is not surprising that the teachers were very conscious of a technical component to their coaching experience and that they were quite vocal with regard to their reactions to it.

Rose referred to the "TEP lingo" as "knowing what labels to put on things" (p.402). Margie agreed that there was a common base which she shared with her colleagues:

> I think there is a technical side to this because we're using different objectives that are certainly given. We've got a basis, a pre-conceived base to start from which is common to all of us. (p.401)

The initial guidelines provided to the staff by the principal encouraged teachers to observe one another teach, provide positive feedback, and become comfortable with one another. With the possible exception of the four teachers in the TE Program, other teachers were free to develop their own form of interaction and choose their own focus. Unlike many peer coaching programs, the Forest Grove project was not intended to transfer specific skills to the classroom. One might argue that it was intended as a review of previously-learned TEP skills, but it was also clearly intended to promote interpersonal relationships on staff. Almost by default, since no other options were offered, teachers followed the pattern they learned in the TEP. In practical terms, that meant they employed an 'A' conference format and they initially focused on the instructional or classroom management skill being emphasized by the group in the TE Program. This became the norm. Consequently, teachers reacted to this standard and the mutual adaptations which occurred tended to be in terms of this pattern because most had little knowledge of other forms.

From the former consultant's point of view, an 'A' conference format was a safe and sensible way to begin peer coaching:

> One interesting comparison I've heard about the format per se, is that it is like learning to cook. Initially you might want to follow the recipe exactly in order for things to turn out the way you want them to. But as you gain experience and knowledge, you might mix things around to suit your needs and come up with something that suits you. But as for something initial, when you're learning a new skill, it's nice to have a recipe to follow. (p.431)

Rose developed her form of peer coaching around the technical model because her goal was to become a skilled conferencer. Her focus was on identifying teaching skills and strategies in the lessons of others and following a prepared conference outline to provide positive feedback to the person whose teaching she had observed. Rose sought to internalize the 'A' conference format before venturing to a 'B' or 'C' format:

> I think that I want to be really good at conferencing because I want to be able to do it perfectly. I want to be able to do it automatically; I want it to be part of me. I want to make that other person feel so good at the end of the conference. Maybe that's why I zeroed in on the technical part, I don't know. (p.51)

Consequently, the technical component represented a significant part of the meaning Rose gave to her peer coaching experience. Yet, the data suggests that all three teachers failed to equate technical feedback with what they felt coaching should be. Mary made this distinction in her interactions with Bev:

> I would say that at this stage we are actually providing feedback.... To me, coaching is where you tell people what they are doing well and where they could improve. (p.365)

Both Mary and Margie said they appreciated some structure to peer coaching, at least initially, but neither was personally attracted to a close adherence to a formal structure. Although she enjoyed the compliments positive feedback provided, Mary believed that when teachers were experienced, there was less need to reply on a technical emphasis in coaching:

> I would lean a little more toward the personal interaction, one reason being that I know that the people on our staff are already strong. I enjoy getting positive feedback; ... it gives you a boost and it also reassures you that you are using these skills or class management ideas. But to me it would be the interaction with another person - to me, you would learn and you would grow just from interacting with them and maybe not spending so much time on this formal thing, but afterwards talking. (p.340)

This "formal thing" Mary spoke of is the technical component which the Forest Grove teachers employed and which some objected to in the evaluation meeting:

> We felt very strongly about the structure of the conference - it's far too canned. We felt very uncomfortable with that.... We'd like it to be a little more informal and to have more sharing and discussing rather than being bound by the structure. (pp.510-511)

Rose, Margie, and Mary were very conscious of a technical component in their peer coaching experience, but they did not seem to consider this 'real' coaching. For them, coaching occurred when they discussed new or different ways to implement classroom skills. Coaching involved more mutually interactive forms such as those found in conferences 'B' and 'C'. Yet, Hunter's (1980) description of her five conference types reveals that they have a defined structure and a predictability about them which makes them all quite technical. However, teachers whose peer coaching goals include exchanging ideas, analyzing lessons, stimulating new ways of teaching, or improving identified weaknesses, would likely be more satisfied with these more advanced forms. Hunter suggests that an 'A' conference is most appropriate for a first conference, or when teachers are apprehensive or defensive.

In the evaluation session, the principal seemed to sense that the 'A' conference format had posed a hurdle for many of the coaching pairs whose goals had been more collegial than technical. Half jokingly, yet with a word of serious caution, she reminded her teachers not to go to the opposite extreme and lose their sense of direction:

> I know you are all going to get rid of those conferences. Remember it is one way that you do get good feedback. Whatever it is that you are doing, focus in on something. I do ask you to do that. Focus in on something and give positive feedback on that, and then share your ideas. (p.522)

Critics of effective teaching, such as Aoki (1986), suggest that technical models of teaching are the lowest level of understanding. "Teachers are more than they do," (p.19) he asserts. While Madeline Hunter may be "uncannily correct" (p.20), Aoki says that her models of teaching and conferencing overlook the inherent humanness which represents the essence of teaching.

Wildman and Niles (1987B) also challenge technical models of teaching and urge teachers to be more reflective and open to collaboration and deliberation. Schon (1983) agrees, but observes that bureaucracies tend to depend on technical expertise. Schon asserts his ideal of the reflective practitioner as one who combines intuitive knowledge with a careful analysis of a setting, prior to taking action. Stallings (1987) questions the application of the Hunter-based model to some educational settings. She suggests that novice teachers may be better suited to a technical approach to teaching while experienced teachers prefer a collaborative approach.

Grimmett et al (1985) reported that there was a potential for some peer coaching projects to become "formalized and contrived" (p.60). The report does not indicate why, but it is possible that a technical component of that project was a factor. At Forest Grove, it was unlikely that the teachers would permit their project to become contrived because most of them identified non-technical goals as primary, and they felt empowered to develop their agenda to obtain them.

Reflecting on the outcome of the evaluation meeting, one of the TEP participants observed:

> I think we covered the points pretty well; people showed what they were happy about and not. I think it became fairly obvious that nobody liked a very strict formal pattern for [peer coaching]. They wanted to have it as a sharing session rather than another special kind of meeting. (p.445)

This teacher and her partner had decided to remain peers in phase two. Asked what they intended to modify, she described their plans for less emphasis on scripting everything the teacher said and more emphasis on obtaining a complete picture of the lesson. The technical component remained, but they seemed to be trying to make its impact less distracting:

> We decided that we won't try to write everything down that we say. It takes so much of our attention that we are not really noticing what other things are going on in the lesson. We are just going to write down points that we like or ideas that we can learn from each other, and then talk about them afterward and try to pick up on the kind of points that Doug has been covering but not quite in as formal a way - make it a little easier. (p.446)

The technical component of peer coaching was also associated with some teachers' intentions to use their peer coaching skills with student teachers. In a city like Edmonton, where there is a university faculty of education, there are frequent requests to accept undergraduate students for practicum assignments. Both Rose and Mary indicated their belief that peer coaching would assist them to be more proficient mentors. Mary rejected the idea of using a lot of technical "jargon" (p.362) with the students, but felt the framework of skills would be a helpful resource to her. Rose indicated that she foresaw more applications for her skill as a conferencer with student teachers than with her peers. She also described a simplified "package" (p.87) of effective teaching skills which she believed would prove useful for her students.

Another indication that the technical component was a significant part of the teachers' peer coaching experience was the suggestion by teachers that they found coaching more beneficial than being conferenced. This implies, that at this stage of peer coaching, these teachers were experiencing an active-passive situation rather than an interactive or active-active one. Ideally, peer coaching should be interactive; both parties should be actively involved. The experience of some of the Forest Grove teachers seemed to be that they were more actively involved when they were coaching or conferencing and less actively involved when they were being conferenced.

Both Margie and Rose indicated that they got more satisfaction out of coaching than being coached. The reason seemed to hinge on the more active involvement of the coaching teacher. Although the 'A' conference requires input from the teacher at scheduled intervals, its regulation of conversation seemed to impede the natural flow of talk between teachers. The Forest Grove teachers referred to this as artificial.

A conversation which occurred in February with the four TEP participants illustrated their responses to coaching and being coached. An exerpt from the complete transcript follows:

> Researcher: When I met with [you] two months ago, I asked if observing or being observed was more valuable to you. I'd love to hear all of your responses again.
>
> Rob: I don't consider one more valuable than the other.

Cheryl: I consider observing much more valuable.

Anne: I think observing is more valuable because you pick up other people's ideas, learn a few things; any little idea that you can pick up is worthwhile. It makes you more aware of how you are teaching and how you are handling the class.

Carole: Theoretically, though, the more valuable part is supposed to be when someone else coaches us. Right? Isn't that when we are supposed to learn something? Otherwise, it's called teacher observation rather than peer coaching.

Rob: But the coaching goes on no matter which sequence is happening.

Carole: If we were theoretically doing peer coaching, the more valuable part should be when we get coached. Right? Because that's when we are getting feedback. So if we are getting more value from observing somebody else, are we doing teacher observation rather than peer coaching?

Researcher: That's a good question.

Cheryl: You know what I find; even if I'm observing somebody else, once you talk about it later, that's when the coaching comes in because if you read it as observer or as observed, once you start discussing it and looking at what that person is doing, it's a two-way step. (pp.447-448)

As earlier data implied, these teachers' experiences of peer coaching seem to suggest that in the early stages of peer coaching, some teachers will interpret their experiences as not meeting their expectations. This seems to be a characteristic of the technical component of peer coaching which surprises some teachers, disappoints others, and is seen as a stage in the evolution of peer coaching by still others.

The Collegial Component

For Mary, Margie, and most of the Forest Grove staff, the collegial component of peer coaching was probably the most significant element in the meaning they attributed to their experience of peer coaching. While it was also part of Rose's meaning, the collegial component did not appear as significant to her as the technical. Of course, this conclusion is based on the data of phase one of the project; it would not only be subject to change but also likely to change over an extended period of peer coaching.

The collegial component is intended to identify the sense that teachers had that they were not alone in their teaching experience. They sensed that this process involved another person with whom they could share themselves and their profession. Collegiality meant having another teacher to whom they could confide and turn for support. It overcame teachers' feelings of isolation.

Rose was referring to collegiality when she and Margie spoke in November of what peer coaching meant to them:

> I think one of the most important things is the feeling of goodwill, or the feeling of acceptance, toward another person. I know that you and I, Margie, have had a special relationship all along. We've had a good feeling for one another, a sharing kind of thing. To get to know a person in this way and to be able to be frank, honest, open and

> forthright and say what you think and feel is very special. (p.403)

Images of friend and neighbour should be associated with the collegial component. The collegial component is closely related to the personal component, and to both the interactive and emotional dimensions. Yet, its significance in the study demanded its individual status. In addition, the collegial component includes a social element, but the emphasis is more collegial than social. The term social has a wider, gregarious connotation. While this meaning was occasionally observed in the data, its impact was such that the social aspect could be subsumed within the mutually supportive meaning of the collegial component.

Little's (1982) explanation of the impact which norms of collegiality have upon schools as workplaces has given added significance to the term collegiality. The collegial component in peer coaching alludes to a meaning similar to that given by Little who saw it constituting a range of personal interactions which developed self-energizing bonds between teachers.

One possible reason why the collegial component of peer coaching assumed a relatively high significance to the Forest Grove staff's experience of peer coaching was that previous opportunities to observe other teachers had been limited. The staff clearly wanted to visit one anothers' classrooms for practical, personal, and collegial reasons. Peer coaching provided that opportunity, and they appreciated it, as these comments at the peer coaching evaluation meeting indicate:

> We felt that it was good that we were told that we were finally going to get out of our classrooms and we finally did observe someone else... It was nice that some of us got a chance to work with people at our same level and we were comfortable with that. (p.503)
>
> We felt that our experience with peer coaching was productive because we were able to see other teachers work and get a chance to talk to them afterward as to how to solve problems. (p.506)

The fact that the staff objected to having their peer coaching time cut short by other meetings and that they requested this afternoon be left open-ended, is evidence of the value which teachers placed on their discussions with their peers. In a November interview, the former TEP consultant remarked that in her experience this kind of collegial sharing "builds a nice rapport in a staff" (p.432). Peer coaching helped teachers realize that their problems were shared by others:

> It was good to see that kids are kids in other classrooms too. I found that reassuring; I just sat back and smiled. (FN p.131)

Experiences like this removed the psychological sense of isolation which Lortie (1975) said exists in schools and replaced it with a norm of collegiality which Little (1982) believes influences staff development.

The meaning which collegial relationships had for individuals is revealed in the data. Mary's personal commitment to socialize more with other staff members, meant that for her, collegial relationships were a high priority. Mary found such a relationship with Bev. This exerpt from her journal reveals traces of personal and collegial components as well as the emotional dimension:

> Bev commented that she didn't realize that she had done so much while I had been observing. I felt good that I had brought to her attention good things that she did that she wasn't aware of. We continued to chat about her hectic day, as unexpected events had occurred for her. Soon it was 3 o'clock. Time to meet about I.E.P.'s. I gave Bev my notes. I enjoyed my time with her. (FN p.118)

Mary lamented the fact that she rarely got a chance to interact with her friends who taught in the portable classrooms. Peer coaching afforded her an opportunity to talk with Bev, at least on peer coaching days. By permitting teachers who were separated physically within a school plant to interact, peer coaching enhanced collegiality in ways which expanded upon one of the boundaries, propinquity, which Rohland (1985) identified as shaping many interpersonal relationships in schools.

Lively and wide-ranging conversations appeared to be one activity which enhanced collegiality in peer coaching. The observation that the relationship which Margie and Rose enjoyed prior to peer coaching did not seem to develop further, may be related to the relative paucity of educational discussions which their interactions generated. Perhaps this was because a major proportion of some sessions was devoted to an analysis of technical skills. Peer coaching sessions and casual greetings seemed to be the extent of their school interaction. While one might have anticipated that the peer coaching relationship would draw them closer together, the apparent clarification of their different philosophical perspectives may have reinforced their individuality - one aspect of the personal component.

The Practical Component

Throughout the data collection period, the teachers made comments and the researcher observed interactions which implied that they experienced a practical component to peer coaching. Sometimes it appeared to overlap with personal or professional components, but it seemed to represent a strong enough element to deserve single-entity status.

The meaningful experience which the practical component seemed to provide was the trading and/or accumulation of useful teaching ideas. In her biography, Rose indicated that her idea of a valuable inservice experience was to gain ideas that she could implement immediately in her classroom. Other teachers shared this perspective and interpreted peer coaching as a means to that end. Margie referred to "things that we are practically gaining from [peer coaching]" (p.403) with her partners. She and Bev shared curricular ideas for grade five. From Rose, she gained practical insights into story-telling. She and Rose collaborated by reviewing the work of a student whom they both had taught. This resulted in a practical and a professional discussion concerning the child's needs and how to handle the parent.

Mary used some of her peer coaching time with Bev to discuss their common problem of how to teach effectively in split-grade rooms. The topic became part of their informal peer coaching agenda after Mary observed her partner teaching, because it was an ongoing problem for both of them. Problem-solving was one aspect of the practical component mentioned by two of the evaluation day groups:

> It was interesting hearing Rob's group, because some of the same things came up in our group. We felt that our experience with peer coaching was productive because we were able to see other teachers work and get a chance to talk to them afterward as to how they solve problems. (p.506)

Another aspect of the practical component was idea sharing. Cheryl mentioned that she had "picked up some really good ideas from Anne, like the way she marks her writing" (p.440). Anne, in return, said in phase two, she and Cheryl planned to "write down points that we like or ideas that we can learn from one another" (p.446), because "any little idea that you pick up is worthwhile" (p.447).

It is an expression in some schools that "teachers are pack-rats when it comes to teaching ideas". The Forest Grove teachers' use of peer coaching time appears to support the saying, and the conclusion, that, for them, there exists a practical component to peer coaching.

The Personal Component

The personal component continually asserted its presence throughout the project in the sense that teachers asserted themselves in their interactions. In symbolic interactionist terms, the 'me' and the 'I' made self-indications whenever definitions or interpretations were needed. To the extent that the 'I' either prevailed, asserted its autonomy, or re-defined itself, the personal component was revealed in the interaction. Looking at it from another perspective, whenever teachers sensed that the peer coaching experience enabled them to feel personal growth or revealed their individual differences and needs, then they experienced the personal component. The interactive and emotional dimensions were seen as an integral part of this component; also, it sometimes overlapped with other components.

Peer coaching proved to be a personal growth experience for each of Rose, Mary, and Margie. Possibly the most significant experiences occurred when each was faced with decisions regarding the accommodation of a peer.

Rose, for example, was reminded of her need for structure and she learned something of her own individuality. Her increased awareness that different teaching styles bring their own strength, seemed to provide Rose with a new insight which broadened her personal perspective. Referring to Margie's teaching style, Rose observed:

> I know that she is not like I am; I observed that; she's not like I am at all in [her teaching style] and I think it was good for me to see that we can have a very different program and still achieve the same goals. (p.93)

Mary's decision to assert herself in order to meet her needs represents for her an ongoing struggle with the shyness which began in her childhood. By choosing to oppose 'the slings and arrows' of her fortune, Mary appeared to experience personal growth. Margie's philosophical differences with Rose prompted her to re-examine her beliefs and assumptions regarding early childhood education. She found this effort personally "revitalized" (FN p.131) her teaching.

For all three teachers there was a sense that peer coaching created a tension which demanded a response. In consciously deciding how to respond, the teachers asserted their efficacy, their autonomy, and their individuality. Rose seemed to anticipate the personal component when she wrote in her journal, "I know that often the things we fear and dread the most are the things we really learn from" (FN p.57).

Because the personal component of peer coaching refers to the private side of teachers, it was difficult to detect and describe in the key informants, and even more so in other teachers with whom the researcher had more casual contact. A hint of this component may have been revealed in this brief exerpt from the transcript of the evaluation meeting. It seems to reveal a sense of self-efficacy and autonomy that the teachers felt as they planned their future involvement in peer coaching:

> Principal: Nilah, I hate to say it, but your inservice might be cancelled. How many are interested in [learning about] a 'B' conference?
>
> Teacher 1: I wouldn't mind seeing the inservice, but I don't want to commit ourselves to doing it.
>
> Teacher 2: Yes, it would be nice to see. It would give us more ideas; then we could choose our own way. (p.522)

When asked if she had seen examples of personal growth in her experience as a consultant, Nilah related this story which deserves to be included on the basis of its relevancy and beauty. It also illustrates an overlap of personal and collegial components:

> The thought that just came to my mind was of a teacher who had been teaching grade one for twenty years and she became involved in peer coaching. It was another teacher on staff with whom she was paired up. At the beginning she was very negative and apprehensive about the whole thing. By the end of the year she was saying what a wonderful experience it was. She wished someone had made this opportunity [available] many years ago. Just the personal growth in realizing what a colleague was doing in their room, that sense of lowering stress, knowing what other people are dealing with in their

> rooms as well as what you are dealing with in your particular setting. (p.432)

In addition to personal growth, the personal component included a sense that teachers came to realize that each of them was uniquely different and had individual needs. Who they were as persons was a significant factor in deciding what they gained, what they contributed, and what meaning they ascribed to peer coaching. The principal clearly acknowledged "just how diverse" (p.506) the staff was in the final evaluation of phase one. She urged the staff to remember individual needs when they made decisions which affected everyone:

> Remember the personnel and the time constraints we have and think about using these excellent ideas about how we might modify and change it to better suit individual needs. I guess we're getting around to it, aren't we - individual needs! (p.508)

The principal reminded the staff that decisions about partners were personal and private. She and the teachers agreed on a procedure which was intended to make everyone feel their privacy was respected and with which both parties would feel comfortable.

The Professional Component

As opposed to the personal component which emphasized growth as a person, the professional component refers to a consciousness that teachers had that they were developing as professionals. Professional growth seems more likely to occur when teachers feel empowered as professionals. This might occur if a teacher's acquisition of new teaching skills provided additional confidence in the classroom or in the presence of colleagues. It might also occur if peer coaching resulted in intellectual or emotional insights which gave a new perspective to teaching.

The professional component was the most difficult to identify in terms of specific data. Instead, the researcher felt it in the sense of excitement shared by the teachers who, after years of wanting to observe one another, finally were doing it. The teachers felt empowered because peer coaching enabled them to come out of their classrooms and cooperate as teams of two and in a larger sense as a teaching community.

Sarason (1974) wrote about the psychological sense of community which resulted when there was a mutually supportive network of relationships. This sense began to emerge at Forest Grove when the staff cooperated in the corporate act of peer coaching for their professional benefit. As indicated earlier, the teachers' notions of what was empowering varied with their individual experiences of coaching. Margie and Bev found their discussion of educational issues professionally stimulating. Rose felt her professional ability to work with student teachers was enhanced by her improved conferencing skills. Mary's collaboration with Bev on curriculum concerns helped her cope in a more confident manner with two grades in one classroom. The mutual interest of Rose and Margie for a student led to their having a professional discussion about the value of retention. Both Margie and Rose foresaw increased professional benefits if peer coaching continued over a period of several years. From their experience of team teaching with the school librarian, they had learned that professional relationships take time to develop:

> Last year I was starting a new teaching model. She had little experience with it either. So we supported each other and worked through the concept as a team. Now this year we are both feeling much more confident about the whole process and it is really paying off with student performance. (p.41)

Stallings (1987) suggested that teachers need growth material rather than formulas. Referring to her study of the Napa/Vacaville project, she implied that teacher effectiveness may have helped move teachers to a higher level of professional development but failed to facilitate their momentum for growth. Peer coaching at Forest Grove appears to have raised teachers' expectations for professional development. Some teachers' expectations appear to have been realized in phase one. The trick will be to structure phase two so that the professional needs of everyone can be accommodated.

Contextual Factors of the Project

The final pieces in this jig-saw puzzle of meaning are represented by a set of elements collectively referred to as contextual factors of the project. These factors, which tended to originate in the context of the school organization, impinged to various extents on the meaning of individuals. Another way of identifying these factors would be to think of them as contextual considerations which affected teachers and hence influenced the meaning they gave to peer coaching. Five factors have been identified and will be discussed briefly: the role of the principal, the selection of partners, arranging for inservice, time-cost considerations, phased cycles.

The Role of the Principal

The critical role which a principal plays in the initiation and implementation of educational innovations is well documented by Fullan (1982), in his book, The Meaning of Educational Change. Many of the Forest Grove staff felt that their principal, if not the initiator of the peer coaching project, was certainly the prime motivator. Her role as staff leader provided the opportunity to establish the timetable for the initiation, scheduling, and evaluation of the project. The principal's perspective concerning the goals and purpose of this phase of peer coaching was implied in the guidelines which she presented to the teachers in the preliminary staff meetings and in later memoranda. The principal appeared to choose a facilitator role rather than one as a director. This was particularly evident in her interactions with individual teachers, to accommodate their requests to find suitable partners.

The principal's interest, enthusiasm, and regular contact with her teachers concerning peer coaching seemed to send a message to the staff that this was an important undertaking. In the peer coaching evaluation, the principal assumed a role as chairperson of an autonomous group. She encouraged the teachers to assume responsibility and ownership for the future directions the project would take. This brief response to a suggestion for another observation time is a simple example of the principal acting as a change agent and as a facilitator:

> It's a really good suggestion to change it, because we don't want it to be artificial. We want it to be prime time. (p.516)

Probably the ultimate indication of the key role of the principal has been the failure of the peer coaching project to resume after its phase one evaluation. The principal indicated that the period from January to March had been a busy time at school, and she had not actively promoted its resumption. Although everyone seems to assume that it will begin again, probably in April, the teachers alone have not taken action to push for its continuance according to the tentative phase two schedule established at the evaluation meeting. They seem content to wait for the principal to take the initiative on their behalf.

The Selection of Partners

Both the principal and the teachers thought and talked a lot about the best way to arrange for peer coaching partners. It was an important issue, yet a sensitive one which had to be handled delicately.

Grimmett et al (1985) spoke of the need for "extreme care" (p.60) in choosing peer partners. Rohland (1985) observed that propinquity and teaching specialty were the variables that most affected communication choices and emergent group patterns in middle school settings.

At Forest Grove, both of Rohland's variables seemed to be at work. There did not seem to be any pattern of TEP graduates seeking or avoiding non-graduates. There were no beginning teachers, so experienced/inexperienced was not a consideration. The Forest Grove solution to the dilemma of selecting partners was to invite teachers to make their own selections, if they were comfortable doing that. If they were uncomfortable, then they could refer to the principal for eventual placement. The concept of the third party seems to have merit. Mary was one who supported this pattern:

> I think it is better to let the people decide [their partners]. If you are going to work with someone, you must have a positive feeling that you will want to work with that person and it will be a positive experience for you. To me, there would have to be someone who would monitor the atmosphere, the emotional scene, or whatever you want to call it. (p.359)

At the evaluation meeting, some teachers wanted to change partners; others did not. The staff agreed that pairs could choose to remain together for phase two, but those who wanted a change should communicate that to the principal. Four of the original fourteen opted to change partners. Rose and Margie decided to form new partnerships. Mary and Bev chose to continue their partnership. The principal hinted that she would expect everyone to change partners at the end of phase two.

The Provision of Inservice

Another contextual factor of the peer coaching project was the provision of inservice sessions for teachers lacking a background in TEP, and the absence of any for the remainder. This arrangement limited the form and expectations of peer coaching to images previously and inconsistently experienced in the TEP. If the program had begun with several inservice sessions which provided the teachers with theory, demonstration and practice in 'A', 'B', and 'C' conferences, they would have had a common experience prior to the selection of teams and the commencement of coaching. Then teams would have had a wider selection of conferences to choose from and a wider base for evaluation later.

Another option would have been to introduce a new strategy, such as inductive thinking, to the entire staff. Then peer coaching could have been the vehicle supporting the implementation of the innovation rather than the innovation itself. Because of the lack of a central inservice focus at Forest Grove, the meaning which peer coaching assumed may have been more individually determined than might have been the case otherwise.

Time-cost Considerations

Time seemed to be a significant consideration for all of those involved in the peer coaching project. Time and costs were concerns for the principal.

In November, the principal commented that the project had become "more of a major theme" (J p.81) for the staff than she had anticipated. She wanted to be able to discuss philosophy and hold curriculum meetings with the staff, as in previous years, but felt in competition with peer coaching for available time. The project was time-consuming, not only for the teachers, but also for the principal and support staff who provided coverage in the classrooms. From the principal's perspective, time was money, and when a secretary or aides left their jobs to do an additional one, something went undone.

In many respects, peer coaching represented something added to the school program, while nothing had been taken away to maintain a balance. Peer coaching had resulted in a lot of "hassle time" (J p.91) for the principal. Time and financial considerations were also familiar to the former TEP consultant on staff. She claimed there was no way to avoid the issue;

> You need the time for teachers to be out of their classroom during the same time that the other teacher is teaching. The only other way you can do that is if you take prep time and they're at a minimum as it is. You build resentment if you start to take that time away from people. (p.432)

Joyce and Showers (undated) in an article entitled, "Low-cost arrangements for Peer Coaching", acknowledge this problem and suggest these options: administrators covering classes; larger than classroom-size instruction groups; independent study and research; video-taping; paid substitutes.

The frequency of peer coaching sessions also had time-cost implications. Joyce and Showers (undated) suggest that the ideal is weekly sessions. Forest Grove's decision to meet every second week seemed to have the support of the participants. No one asked for a change; Mary said that it was often enough for her.

The data revealed that there was a concensus among the teachers that the scheduling of simultaneous interviews for the last half hour prior to dismissal was inappropriate. Here was one teacher's viewpoint:

> The timing is totally wrong! I don't care if it's grade six kids or kindergarten, the timing is all off. It's just the wrong time of day to get any kind of a decent feeling for what really happens in the classroom. (p.417)

At the staff evaluation, the fixed time was quickly changed to a flexible time, to be arranged by the two teachers and the person providing coverage. Although this arrangement was not tried while data were being collected, it appeared to be a popular and sensible solution to a vexing problem.

The teachers also reported that they wanted their peer coaching conferences to be kept free of other commitments. On four out of the five sessions, other meetings were scheduled at 3:00 or 3:15, thus effectively imposing closure on the conference after thirty or forty-five minutes. Mary was one who hoped the conferences could become open-ended. When conferences ended at three o'clock, she felt she was "rushing against time" (p.356), but when the time was extended to 3:15 she found she could manage. Although Mary said she would feel obliged to cut short a conference which went on too long, she never felt that discussing educational concerns with a colleague was a waste of time:

> To me your time is never wasted if you are with another teacher and you are sharing ideas, discussing curriculum or students. (p.356)

This supports but puts a slightly different interpretation on Lortie's (1975, p.177) contention that "time is the single most important resource teachers possess in their quest for productivity and psychic rewards". It also adds strength to Wildman and Niles' (1987A) argument that uncommitted time is one of the conditions for professional growth.

Phased Cycles

An inconspicuous but not insignificant factor in the peer coaching project was the decision to arrange peer coaching sessions in a cycle which began with goal-setting and ended with evaluation. This knowledge seemed to provide a valued opportunity for the participants to suggest modifications and make personal changes. This built-in feature seemed reassuring because teachers did not feel they were committed to a long-term arrangement. Especially in this initial phase, this appeared to be a significant consideration.

In some respects, the first phase of the peer coaching project resembled the four moments of action research described by Kemmis and McTaggart (1982). An examination of the action research cycle described in this brief text might prove useful to teachers planning to implement peer coaching in stages.

Summary

This chapter involved an analysis and discussion of the themes which emerged from the data collected during the Forest Grove peer coaching project. The chapter attempted to explore the multiple meanings which the three experienced teachers, who were the focus of the study, gave to their experience of peer coaching. A peer coaching model identified the elements of meaning and implied relationships among the elements. Three categories of elements were designated: dimensions, components, and factors. Two dimensions, an interactive one and an emotional one, were seen to relate to one another as well as to the components and factors. The interactive dimension was shown to be central and critical to peer coaching. The form which peer interaction assumed at various stages, affected which of the five components had meaning for individuals. The components identified were called technical, collegial, practical, personal, and professional. Forms of interaction which permitted peers to achieve mutual accommodation of goals resulted in increased satisfaction for individuals. The data suggested that the emotional dimension included a range and variety of emotions which teachers experienced at various stages of peer coaching. Although individual teachers' meanings of peer coaching were different, they appeared to be comprised of the elements in the model.

Based on the data, a definition of the meaning of peer coaching for the Forest Grove teachers would be that peer coaching is a form of personal interaction which involves reciprocal observation and conferencing. It encourages personal and professional development in teachers by their identifying, reinforcing, and discussing the technical skills of teaching, sharing practical ideas, discussing professional issues, and developing norms of collegiality. As teachers engage in these interactions and joint activities, they experience a variety of emotions. Certain factors in the context of the project also will impinge on teachers' meanings. At Forest Grove those factors included: the role of the principal, the selection of partners, the provision of inservice, time-cost considerations, and a cyclical pattern of implementation.

All three of the teachers in the study valued the peer coaching experience and indicated that some aspects of it had helped them to develop personally and professionally. All had to negotiate their form of interaction with their respective peer; all experienced a variety of emotions which changed as the project evolved; all sensed that peer coaching was an evolving process which could be thought of as stages which involved increasingly complex forms of interactions and which encouraged different emphases on the components. The primary focus of the teachers appeared to be technical and collegial components of peer coaching, with less emphasis on the remaining components. Biographical elements and professional goals affected the priorities of individuals. These partially accounted for the different emphases of the teachers. In phase one, Margie and Mary seemed to place a higher priority on the collegial component, while Rose's focus seemed to be the technical component.

Working Hypotheses

The analysis of the data generated ten working hypotheses which represent generalized relations among the categories and their properties (Glaser and Strauss; 1967, p.35). These working hypotheses are intended as general principles suggested by the data.

1. The peer coaching model (Figure 2) represents a working hypothesis of the elements of peer coaching which give meaning to the experience.

2. An interactive dimension and an emotional dimension appear to be associated with all the elements of peer coaching.

3. Peer coaching is likely to have an impact on one or more of these aspects of a teacher's career and/or life: technical, collegial, personal, practical, professional.

4. Peer coaching seems to evolve through a succession of stages. This evolution was observable in the dimensions and the components of the model.

5. Teachers who have been coached in a teacher effectiveness program will tend to imitate or adapt that pattern in a school peer coaching project which lacks a specific training component.

6. Individual preferences regarding goals and conferencing formats in peer coaching are strongly affected by personal beliefs and biography.

7. If coaching peers are able to develop a mutually accommodating form of interaction, then they are more likely to interpret their joint activity as successful.

8. Initial peer coaching concerns appear to follow a sequence of self concerns, task concerns, and concerns for others. Fuller (1969) has identified this pattern as representative of the stages of teaching and Hall (1976) has used this pattern as a basis for his stages of concerns chart.

9. Experienced teachers tend to prefer a form of peer interaction which has some structure, yet, which permits an informal relationship between them.

10. Teachers involved in peer coaching seem to favour cyclical arrangements which permit goal-setting, implementation, and evaluation. This permits them to discuss and suggest improvements to their ongoing program.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What is the meaning of peer coaching for experienced teachers? Answering that question was the purpose of this study. The literature attests to the power of peer coaching to transfer newly-learned teaching skills to the classroom; it also describes the benefits of interpersonal relationships which teachers ascribe to peer coaching. Since both the transfer value which relates to inservice education and the interpersonal value which relates to collegiality are important for staff development, the researcher chose to investigate the meaning which three experienced elementary teachers gave to peer coaching.

The research design was developed using the naturalistic paradigm as described by Guba (1981). It incorporated a conceptual framework of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) and qualitative research methods (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). A conceptual framework of symbolic interactionism was selected because it offered guidelines for analyzing social interaction, yet was sensitive to the internal and external factors which affect the final meanings people assign to joint activities with others. This framework also permitted the voices of the teachers to articulate their meaning as they defined themselves, interpreted the other, and participated in joint actions. The researcher assumed a participant observer stance which permitted him to become well enough acquainted with the participants in their context to interpret events as they would. Interpretations were triangulated with the participants, interviews, and document examination. The meanings which emerged from the data were viewed in the context of a staff which was participating for the first time in a peer coaching project. This was further framed by the knowledge that the three teachers and the majority of the other teachers on the staff of Forest Grove Elementary School had participated in their district's Teacher Effectiveness Program. This Program used peer coaching to transfer class management and instructional skills to the classroom.

Although the conclusions of this study are based on a case study involving only three teachers, the researcher suggests that this case is significant to the extent that readers are able to identify with the people, the setting, and the unfolding circumstances. It is not the purpose of naturalistic research to discover principles which can be generalized and are predictable. Instead the purpose is to provide rich description so that others can identify with the study and take their own meanings from it. The conclusions, implications, and recommendations which follow represent the researcher's attempt to give specificity to the interpretation of the data and allow its meaning to speak to educators who may work in similar circumstances.

The remainder of this chapter is arranged in five sections. The first part represents conclusions about the meaning of peer coaching for the teachers. The second focuses on conclusions related to peer coaching and its context. The third section presents implications and recommendations based on the two sets of conclusions. The dissertation concludes with personal reflections on the study, the conceptual framework and naturalistic research.

Conclusions About the Meaning of Peer Coaching

These conclusions which follow are an attempt to reflect the meaning of peer coaching from the teachers' perspectives.

1. Peer coaching meant participating in a long-term staff development project which involves stages. The teachers saw themselves as being at an initial stage in which it was normal to feel awkward and anxious. The teachers expected that peer coaching would evolve in such a way that the methods they used to conference would change over time, their emotional reactions would vary in kind and intensity, and the contextual arrangements would be modified by successive phases of planning, implementing, and evaluating.

2. Peer coaching meant experiencing the elements depicted in the peer coaching model (Figure 2, p.239): interactive and emotional dimensions; technical, collegial, practical, personal, and professional components; a set of contextual factors which related to the Forest Grove project. These factors consisted of the role of the principal, selecting a partner, the provision of inservice training, time-cost considerations, and phased cycles.

3. Peer coaching meant interacting with a peer. Teachers placed the interactive dimension at the focal point of their peer coaching experience. In their interactions, teachers sent messages which revealed who they were, what their skills were, and what their peer coaching goals were. These messages were generally accurately interpreted by their peers. When these definitions or messages were congruent, it was easier and more comfortable to plan and carry out peer coaching together than when the messages created tensions. When this happened, peers were faced with three options: to redefine goals which would accommodate a peer, to negotiate new goals, or to persevere with the original goals and risk blocking or partially blocking the goals of both peers. When teachers failed to develop congruent goals, they experienced personal dilemmas because there was no apparent solution which could satisfy both their goals.

4. Peer coaching meant experiencing different emotional responses. The teachers illustrated that there is an emotional dimension to peer coaching by expressing their feelings as they experienced the various elements of peer coaching. These feelings changed in form and intensity as individual teachers encountered different components and progressed to different stages.

5. Peer coaching meant asking questions about one's purpose for coaching. Many teachers did not interpret the initial forms of interaction as peer coaching. Instead they used terms like 'feedback' and 'teacher observation' to describe their activities.

6. Peer coaching meant seeking a form of interaction which was comfortable for the coaching peers, yet one which enabled them to meet their goals. The teachers generally felt that a structured form of guided interaction, such as the 'A' conference which many used initially, was inappropriate for peer interactions. At least one teacher, however, liked this format because she felt it suited her goals. Others seemed to prefer a format which encouraged a direct and natural dialogue based either on classroom observations or on educational issues. It is significant to note, however, that teachers expressed a perceived need for some initial focus and guidelines for their interaction. Also, there seemed to be a concensus that

teachers would provide only positive feedback of a peer's teaching.

7. Peer coaching meant trying to decide whether to imitate the TEP experience, adapt it, or develop a new form. The teachers initially associated peer coaching with their experience in the Teacher Effectiveness Program. In that case a consultant used mostly 'A' conferences and a few 'B' conferences to transfer instructional and class management skills to the classroom. Many of the Forest Grove teachers initially followed this pattern and focused on a pre-determined skill. However, over the course of the project, they gradually modified and adapted both the observation period and the conference.

8. Peer coaching meant realizing that teachers gain the most benefit when they are actively involved with another person. Although it was not a universal phenomenon, in the initial phase, teachers felt that coaching [observing and conferencing] was more beneficial to them than being coached.

9. Peer coaching meant sharing lives with another person who is a teacher. The teachers found that peer coaching provided a means by which they could become acquainted with other teachers in ways which permitted personal, collegial, and professional growth not previously experienced or experienced only in a superficial way. This collegial component of peer coaching enhanced the teachers'

sense of personal and professional togetherness and was a highly valued aspect of peer coaching. It figured strongly in the meaning they gave to peer coaching. Collegiality seemed to be strengthened when the teachers used informal structures for observing and conferencing and when they participated in lively discussions which were not exclusively educational in nature.

10. For some teachers, peer coaching meant an opportunity to learn skills which would be useful when acting as cooperating teachers for student teachers on their practica.

11. Peer coaching meant that teachers had opportunities to gain and share practical teaching ideas and to engage in mutual problem solving.

13. Peer coaching meant experiencing professional growth. For some it happened during discussions with a peer concerning significant educational issues. For others it was sensed in the feeling of solidarity which the staff experienced as they planned, acted, and evaluated together. It was also evident in the air of enthusiasm with which the teachers welcomed the opportunity to expand their teaching horizons through inter-class visitations. This group feeling of being a teacher who is cooperatively striving for professional growth, resembled Sarason's (1974) psychological sense of community.

14. Peer coaching meant a long-term commitment of time and energy for everyone involved. It also meant discovering that interaction was worth the effort. At the end of phase one of the project [after three months], there seemed to be a strong general feeling among key informants and the staff that the peer coaching project was worthwhile and should be continued with certain modifications.

15. Peer coaching meant asking another teacher to be your peer, waiting to be asked, or referring to the principal for eventual matching.

Conclusions About The Peer Coaching Project

In the course of the study, meaning emerged from the data which did not directly pertain to the meaning the teachers gave to peer coaching. Those meanings sometimes came from the teachers and sometimes from the researcher. Often they were shared by both. They tended to be observations about peer coaching as a staff development project. These conclusions about the peer coaching project attempt to identify critical considerations for others who might consider a similar project.

1. Although inservice sessions were made available for teachers who lacked a background in the T.E. Program, there appeared to be an assumption that teachers with a background in the TEP possessed the skills and knowledge to peer coach successfully.

2. The school principal played a critical role as an initiator, facilitator, coordinator, and supporter. The staff seemed to expect their principal to assume these roles. It seems unlikely this project would have ever begun without the principal's direct and active involvement.

3. Peer coaching at Forest Grove seemed to encompass more than one form of coaching. Most coaching appeared to be a mixture of technical and collegial coaching. No known examples of challenge coaching were observed.

4. There were individual differences within the group of teachers who had a background in the TEP regarding their preferences for conferencing style and peer coaching goals. The biographical make-up of the teachers appeared to be a primary factor in determining these personal preferences.

5. The success of peer coaching appeared to depend to a great extent on the comfortable and meaningful interaction between peers. The chances of this happening were increased if peers were able to accommodate one another's goals in a reciprocal relationship. Three issues which it seems peers must negotiate are goals, conferencing style, and style of teaching. Even so, it seems unreasonable to expect that all peer partnerships will be successful, no matter what criteria are employed.

6. At the end of the first phase, the Forest Grove teachers appeared unenthusiastic toward becoming

knowledgeable and skilled in 'B' and 'C' styles of conferences. Two possible explanations were inferred: (a) they no longer saw conference format as an issue because they were content with their present arrangements, and (b) they did not want to commit additional time to this project at this time.

7. The teachers had strong feelings about scheduling peer coaching time. They felt that observations should be scheduled at a time which permitted a normal lesson development and which was convenient for those directly affected. Fixed observation times for everyone were not acceptable. The teachers also valued their conferencing time and wanted to be able to extend it as they chose without interruption by meetings scheduled by others.

Although most teachers did not comment on these arrangements, there appeared to be general support for peer coaching sessions at two week intervals and for adding teaching time to other school days in order to dismiss the children an hour early on peer coaching days.

8. The teachers seemed to appreciate the cyclical phases of the peer coaching project. This permitted planning, implementing, and evaluating activities prior to the start of a new phase. This arrangement seemed to give the teachers a sense of ownership over their project because they felt empowered to make modifications at the end of the first phase. They also knew that they had the

option of changing partners at the end of each phase. These considerations seemed to contribute to the overall positive feelings the staff had concerning this project.

Implications and Recommendations

The conclusions of this study raise a number of questions for school-based personnel such as teachers and principals and for district-based personnel such as consultants, supervisors, and superintendents.

School-based personnel who are considering peer coaching as a means for staff development should ask questions about the purpose of and preparation for peer coaching. Are its strengths understood? What is the intended purpose? Is peer coaching being used as a means or as an end? Is there expertise on staff or will it have to be brought in? Will the staff need special training? Does this fit into a long-range school plan? Are the teachers' purposes for peer coaching consistent with their preparation for coaching and their training for observing and conferencing. Is the form of peer coaching being utilized developmentally appropriate for the teachers?

At Forest Grove, the original staff purposes emphasized expanding collegial relationships, but the TEP preparation was based on the need to transfer skills to the classroom. Which was the priority? If it was to develop collegial relationships, then should the staff have received specific training in that area? Should there have been a clearer articulation of the staff goals and a closer examination of how peer coaching could be used to accomplish this end? Metaphorically, was new wine put in old bottles? What recommendations can be made which will utilize forms of peer coaching which are more consistent with the staff and individual goals?

For district-based personnel, the conclusions raise questions about whether the school district through its instructional processes consultants has a responsibility to prepare teachers for peer coaching which goes beyond the presently constituted TE Program. Are there aspects of the TEP which should be examined in the light of these conclusions? Does the district have a responsibility to educate school-based leaders concerning the use of peer coaching in staff development? If so, what form should it take?

Recommendations for School-based Personnel

Recommendation 1: Prior to attempting peer coaching, school-based personnel should hold planning sessions which consider a) professional development goals, b) alternative forms of cooperative professional development, and c) different peer coaching models.

It seems critical to determine what the school goals are prior to committing a staff to a particular form of professional development. Peer coaching is one of five forms of cooperative professional development outlined by Glatthorn (1987). If the school goal is a form of cooperative professional development, then an article like Glatthorn's could prove invaluable for helping staff planners make knowledgeable decisions about the most suitable approach. If the decision is that peer coaching is required, then it follows that various models of peer coaching should be examined. Garmston's (1987) article would be useful in this regard. Other local sources of information are also available. Within Edmonton, there are several models of peer coaching which have been attempted. The principals of those schools and/or the consultants who helped coordinate those programs represent a valuable source of practical information which should be consolidated, advertised, and shared at principals' meetings, teachers' workshops, or special inservice sessions.

Recommendation 2: Prior to peer coaching, a staff professional development committee should develop long-range plans to present to staff. These plans should address the project goals, the rationale for the project, the form of peer coaching, the inservice training necessary, the schedule for implementation including cycled phases, and the means of evaluation and maintenance.

Recommendation 3: Peer coaching should either be preceded by or run concurrently with a series of inservice sessions for all staff which include theory, demonstration, and practice with feedback regarding the purposes and elements of peer coaching, the stages involved in coaching, partner selection, negotiating mutual goals, observation, and conferencing.

This recommendation encompasses a number of ideas which follow from the conclusions. The key idea is the need for inservice sessions which develop a base of common knowledge and procedures about peer coaching. Even if a staff favours adaptations within the project, the inservice sessions provide teachers with options with which to experiment. Inservice sessions are an excellent way to introduce various forms of observing and conferencing. Conference styles 'A', 'B' and 'C' could be introduced, practised, and even coached, if teams of three or more were used. The depth of experience and expertise on many staffs often necessitates a smorgasbord of inservice strategies rather than a single fare for all. After a few initial sessions which act as an introduction, it should be relatively convenient to combine inservice sessions with actual implementation. Partner selection, goal-setting, observation, and conferencing might be handled this way.

The inservice sessions would provide a convenient means to prepare teachers for the changing nature of the emotional dimension. Hall's (1976) chart showing the stages of concern about an innovation might be a helpful reference for this purpose. Prior knowledge of this nature not only sensitizes peers to the normalcy of their own reactions, but also helps them to be more sensitive to and supportive of their peers.

Recommendation 4: School-based personnel should both expect and support the adaptation of rigidly structured observation and conferencing formats to permit teachers to interact in ways they find natural and comfortable.

This should not be interpreted as a recommendation to abolish formats or guidelines someone else has developed. Instead, it is an invitation to make the structures serve the purposes of the project, rather than to permit the project to be shaped by the structure. Guidelines are useful starting points, but it is important to continuously monitor progress toward the goal.

Recommendation 5: School-based personnel should carefully consider the commitments of time, personnel and finances required to make a peer coaching project successful.

If conceived as a staff project, peer coaching can become a serious burden unless other commitments are cut

If conceived as a staff project, peer coaching can become a serious burden unless other commitments are cut back or temporarily placed on hold. Time commitments of from one to three years should be considered.

If peer coaching is undertaken by groups within the staff, then the impact may not be as significant, but those participating will undoubtedly need encouragement and special consideration by other teachers and the administration.

Recommendation 6: School-based personnel should designate one person to act as a peer coaching coordinator.

If the principal enjoys the trust and confidence of the staff, then the flexibility inherent in the job makes him or her a logical choice. The coordinator should be knowledgeable about peer coaching, be easily accessible to staff, be sensitive to individual concerns, and be able to facilitate problem solving with minimal disruption.

Recommendation 7: School-based personnel should plan for blocks of time for peer coaching which include goal-setting sessions, evaluation sessions, and opportunities to exchange partners.

By relating the peer coaching phases to the natural terms or blocks imposed by the school year, participants can be assured that they can discuss needed changes or seek new partners. Both arrangements seem important for insuring that peers maintain a sense of control and ownership in the project.

Recommendation 8: Wherever practical, school-based personnel should allow those directly affected to schedule the time for observations.

At Forest Grove this meant that the coaching peers and the person who supervised the observer's class agreed beforehand on the time. This makes it easier for the observer to see the natural flow of a lesson and it removes the temptation for the teacher to create an artificial lesson.

Recommendation 9: Whenever feasible, school-based personnel should insure that peer conference times are left open-ended.

This arrangement permits teachers the luxury of exploring new issues without having to curtail discussions for another meeting. Insuring open-ended conferences is easiest if a single conference day is designated. Otherwise, conflicts are unavoidable.

Recommendation 10: School-based personnel should encourage teachers to choose their own coaching partners. However, it is reasonable to expect that the coordinator will help make arrangements.

The inservice sessions prior to partner selection should explore the criteria for being coaching peers. It might be helpful for individuals to advertise their personal goals in group discussions so others can get a sense of who might make suitable partners.

Recommendations for District-based Personnel

Recommendation A

District-based personnel should regularly organize and conduct professional workshops for principals and key teachers to discuss the implications of the TE Program for school-based peer coaching projects.

The TE Program utilizes a form of peer coaching which has been shown (Bennett, 1987) to affect positively the transfer of skills to the classroom. By utilizing only technical forms of coaching and mainly 'A' and 'B' forms of conferencing with many teachers over the period of its existence, the TEP may have left the impression that this is the extent of peer coaching. If school-based personnel try to apply the TEP model of peer coaching they could become frustrated unless they have a bigger picture of evolving forms and possibilities.

In the TEP, because of the direct involvement of the consultants, teachers learn to implement peer coaching skills in a manner which is faithful to the TEP model. Fullan (1982) refers to this as a high-fidelity model of implementation. For change to continue, high-fidelity models require top-down direction and close supervision. This is not generally possible or desirable at the school level. For school peer coaching projects to be successfully implemented, a collaborative model which encourages mutual adaptation is recommended (McLaughlin and Marsh, 1978). Hence it is necessary to provide school-based personnel with the knowledge base and the inservice skills either to expand on the foundation the TEP consultants have built or to ask for outside consultation.

Recommendation B

District-based personnel, in collaboration with university educators, should attempt to develop a comprehensive plan for teacher education which addresses the total requirements of undergraduate students in education, coordinating teachers in schools, beginning teachers in the public system, and the relation of the TE Program to these groups.

Some teachers saw the TEP as a valuable resource for helping them to work with student teachers. This speaks well of the interest and dedication of teachers toward newcomers to the profession. It indicates a need felt by coordinating teachers in dealing with students assigned to them. It also attests to the value which practising teachers attribute to the TEP for beginning teachers.

However, utilizing a TEP outline with student teachers represents an unintended purpose, the implications of which should be carefully examined from the perspectives of the various stakeholder groups. The fact that the Edmonton Public School Board saw fit to enroll interns from the Initiation to Teaching Program in the TE Program may be evidence that undergraduates should receive comparable training at the university. There are several key issues in this recommendation. If the stakeholders could collaborate on them, then everyone stands to benefit.

Final Reflections

This study began as a search for the meaning of peer coaching and it ended being a partial discovery of what it is to be teachers and researcher interacting under the banner of peer coaching. I have learned a great deal about the complexities of collegial interaction in that social institution we call school. I have grown to appreciate the potential for people learning together once we remove our shells of suspicion and relate to each other as person to person. I have experienced peer coaching through Rose, Margie, Mary, and the other members of the Forest Grove staff. I have tried to describe their experiences and convey their meanings. I have attempted to reach conclusions and make recommendations which will encourage others to consider how the issues which this study raises speak to their situations.

It is incumbent upon me to reflect on the conceptual framework utilized in this study, and to comment on the methodology employed. The chapter concludes with these sections.

The Conceptual Framework

Symbolic interactionism proved to be a much more useful research tool than I had initially expected. The lack of a single definitive source of concepts and terms made it initially difficult to get a grasp on all relevant aspects of this perspective. Consequently, additional insights continued to emerge from various sources during the term of this study. That may have been a benefit in disguise. Initially, however, it was disconcerting, as were the specific meanings attributed to such common words as definitions and interpretations, or to jargon such as lines of action and schemes of definition. Yet, once the basic concepts were grasped and I approached symbolic interactionism as a conceptual framework instead of as a theory, I found it helped me focus on certain aspects of social interaction which I might otherwise have overlooked. Symbolic interactionism was a conceptual map which sensitized me to both the internal and external elements of social interaction. It seemed to fit well with the naturalistic research by providing a lens to look at the setting, the biographies of the key participants, their definitions of the situation, and their inner conflicts as they strove to work together on this project. I also found that symbolic interactionism allows researchers to acknowledge the humanity and the complexity of themselves and of those they would portray.

Naturalistic Research

Education, or at least schooling, is ultimately a human enterprise which I believe should be studied from within, using personal perspectives. As a participant observer, I was part of the school setting; I got to know some of the teachers very well, and therein lies the dilemma. You feel their anxieties and suspicions; you wrestle with their problems; you take quiet comfort in their solutions and their professional growth. And yet, you remain a researcher who drops in when it is convenient or expedient, and who leaves when the project ends. As a participant observer, I was part of the project, but I was not personally committed to it, and I could not actively attempt to shape the outcome. This was frustrating for me and also for some of the people at Forest Grove. This experience has inclined me somewhat to the action research model, which depends on equal involvement by both teachers and researchers.

This experience led me to conclude that naturalistic research is not widely known or understood in public schools. The presence of a researcher who wrote about what people thought and how they interacted was a threat to some and uncomfortable for others. I have admiration and respect for those who had faith that I would not betray them. I hope I have honoured that faith.

Naturalistic research is an exploration of an area for which the route cannot be completely mapped out in advance. Yet, once decisions have been made, it is sometimes impossible to go back and explore routes previously overlooked. People and circumstances make that impossible. There are both advantages and disadvantages to naturalistic research; it offers dilemmas but also rewards. Working closely with people and trying to capture the essence of who we are and what we are about is difficult, but, ultimately, worthwhile.

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APPENDIX A

PEER COACHING JOURNAL

What is it?

It is like a diary which traces your personal journey through the experience of peer coaching. The purpose of the journal is to encourage you to reflect on what is happening at a time when you are not bothered by other pressures.

Do I have to keep a journal?

From my own experience and from what I have read I believe that keeping a journal will prove to be a worthwhile development of this nature. However, the research design does not require it, and the decision is yours entirely.

What do I put in it?

That depends on you - your mood, the time available, etc. Many use their journal to record a running commentary of their experiences. Entries might range from a brief note that you were conferenced, to a lengthy description of your feelings while being observed and conferenced, your anxieties, or your feeling of satisfaction when your peer complimented you. Your journal is also a good place to record questions you have, comments you want to pass on, or just reminders to yourself.

What is most important?

It is important to make some record of your thoughts and events on a regular basis. Perhaps daily - before you leave school, or weekly - after contacts with your peer. You can always add further comments later. It is not important to worry about spelling, handwriting, or grammar.

Do I have to share it?

Some adults involved in professional development do share their journals on a regular basis. They find they can write about subjects they have difficulty expressing in oral speech. They also find sharing enriches their conversations and helps them get to know one another better.

Some adults use their journals to introduce topics into discussions but they do not actually exchange them. An option is to bring the journal to an interview; it can be a useful reminder, and you may wish to selectively quote from your journal.

Others keep their journal completely private. They find the exercise of keeping a journal rich and personally rewarding but feel uncomfortable about having others read it even though they would not find it unsettling.

The decision to share or not is yours. Let's discuss it as a group, but it is important that each of us is comfortable with the decision. We may want to defer a decision until later.

APPENDIX B

Teacher________________________

Date________________________

CONFERENCE PLANNING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION: Set the Atmosphere for the Conference

Greeting____

____

Pleasant Feeling Tone____

____

Overview of

a. the Sequence of the Conference, Review the Format

____

____

b. General Purpose for Having the Conference (Objective)

____

____

TRANSITIONAL STATEMENT

____

Phase 1: Complete the Diagnosis of What You Observed the Teacher Doing

Request that the Teacher Tell You the Things He/She Was Doing (Can be specific or general).

____

____

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: THE MEANING OF PEER COACHING FOR EXPERIENCED TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY

RESEARCHER: NEIL H. SCOTT
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I hereby consent to participate in this study and to allow the researcher to observe and/or tape interviews with the undersigned. I understand that whatever information I give is considered confidential and will be used in such a way as to protect my anonymity.

....
Date Principal subject

....
Witness